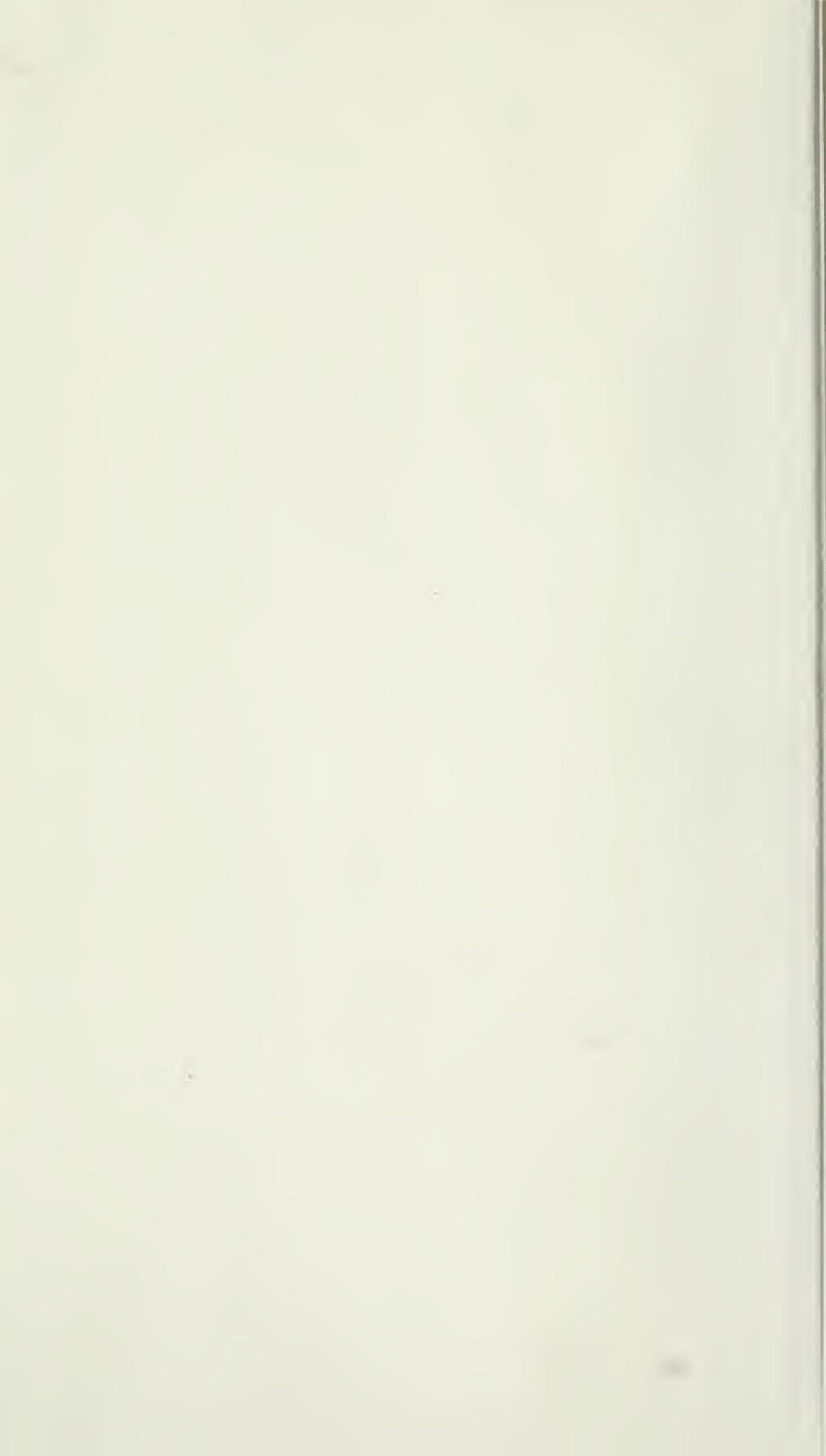


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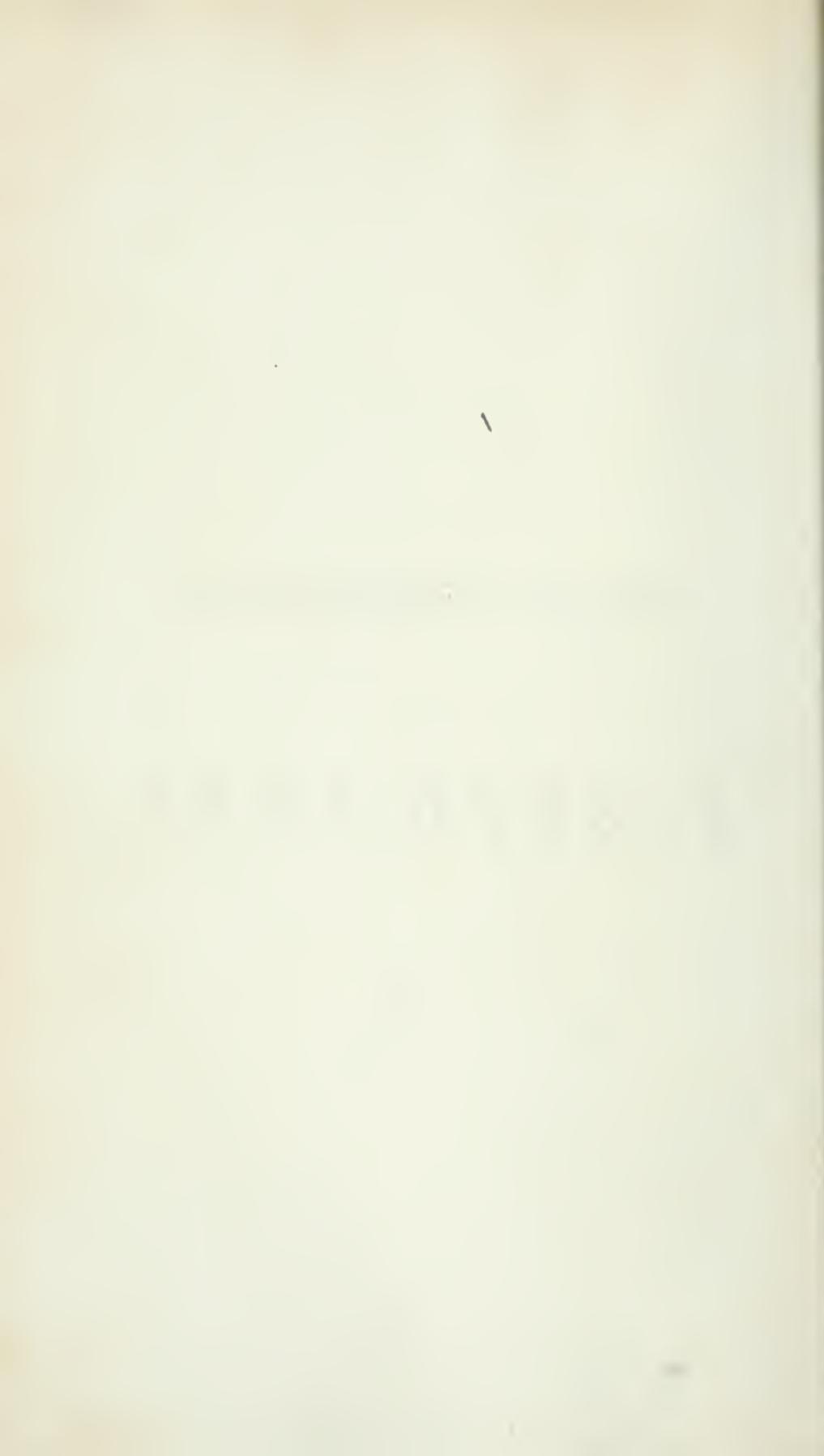
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LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

J O S E P H R E E D.





J. T. R.ud
President

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LIFE
AND
CORRESPONDENCE

OF

JOSÉPH REED,

MILITARY SECRETARY OF WASHINGTON, AT CAMBRIDGE; ADJUTANT-
GENERAL OF THE CONTINENTAL ARMY; MEMBER OF THE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES; AND PRESIDENT OF THE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE STATE OF
PENNSYLVANIA.

BY HIS GRANDSON.

WILLIAM B. REED.

VOL. I.

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PHILADELPHIA:
LINDSAY AND BLAKISTON.
1847.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1847,

By WILLIAM B. REED,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern District of
Pennsylvania.

C. SHERMAN, PRINTER,

19 St. James Street.

TO

JOHN SERGEANT,

OF PENNSYLVANIA.

DEAR SIR,

Permit me to dedicate to you these Volumes, as a memorial, the most enduring I am able to offer, of affectionate esteem. For private kindness, extending from my earliest recollection to the present moment, this is not the place for thanks. But for the example of patriotic conduct, for precepts of high public virtue, for untiring devotion, at any cost or sacrifice, to the great interests of our country, and of the community in which we live, for all that makes the character of the American conservative Statesman, I can thank you, in the full assurance that our fellow-citizens will sympathize in my gratitude, and applaud its strong and most sincere expression.

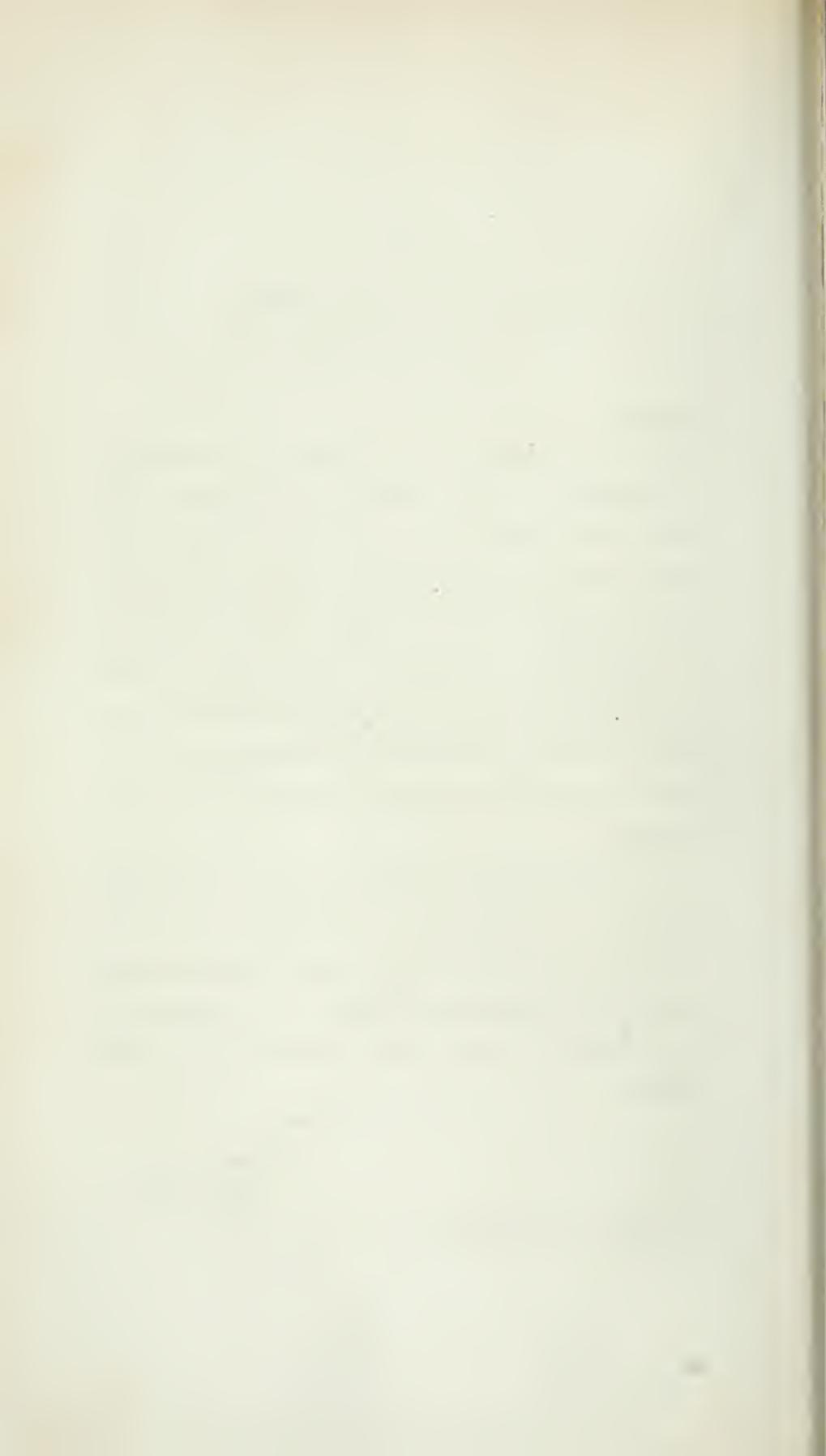
These Volumes describe the career of one who was your Father's friend, at a time when the fidelity of friendship was severely tried. They knew and loved each other well. They sustained each other in the trials and perils of a War of Revolution, and to their memory, and the memory of the illustrious men who acted with them,—I am happy to offer the tribute of justice which History has too long withheld.

Very sincerely,

Yours,

THE AUTHOR.

Walnut Street, May 18th, 1847.



P R E F A C E.

IN preparing these Volumes, no pains have been spared in the collation and scrutiny of original materials, and the thorough study of all that has been published on the subject of the Revolution, in the earnest hope that what is now offered to the American reader may at least be exact in the statement of facts, and as far as possible, fair in the expression of opinions. Nothing will be found in these volumes, unsustained by what the author believes to be credible evidence; no opinion of men or things which the sober exercise of judgment on testimony, often conflicting, does not authorize. Recent as are the events of the Revolution, they are, as the thorough student well knows, often perplexed and confused, and it is little less difficult to arrive at a satisfactory result in relation to them, than to questionable matters of our own times. Any one who desires to write honestly and candidly on such matters must pursue inquiry with a resolute determina-

tion to seek the truth. Such has been my object in this biographical work, its pursuit having cost much labour, spread over a space of nearly twenty years. Of the success of the effort the candid reader must judge.

It would be great affectation to disguise the active motives which have stimulated me in the publication of this work. One is altogether personal; and may be candidly described as the pride of ancestry, which every American has a right to cherish, and which, wholly distinct from irrational and offensive boastfulness, may be indulged, so far at least as to guide conduct, elevate the aims of life, and make one ashamed to discredit the examples of the past. It certainly does not weaken patriotic impulses for a man to feel that he and his children bear a patriot's name; and pride becomes stronger, and surer, and more rational when the world sees on the faithful record of the past how that name was earned.

Another motive, less personal, has had great influence; a desire to do justice to my native State,—to Pennsylvania,—a Commonwealth whose claims on the gratitude of posterity for revolutionary services have never been fully acknowledged. While I hope that this solicitude for the good name of Pennsylvania is not in these volumes offensively manifested, I wish very distinctly to avow its influence. State pride is a sentiment which, like the personal motive already alluded to, every intelligent and patriotic man

ought to encourage. It is an element of strength. Who that looks at Massachusetts, and Virginia, and South Carolina, will question this? And why should not Pennsylvania cherish and be proud of her memories of the past? Why should Bunker Hill, Fort Moultrie, Yorktown, and Faneuil Hall, monopolize the praise of history; and so little be said of Barren Hill, of Brandywine, of Germantown,—of the Philadelphia State House, where Independence was declared and Washington appointed, and Carpenter's Hall, where the Mother Congress of 1774 met.

The fault,—it may be conceded,—is in ourselves. My hope is that works, such as the one I now offer to the public, may serve to invigorate this healthy and inoffensive local feeling, and realize the sentiment expressed by a stranger, who, visiting our shores in the midst of the Revolution, foresaw the day when the battle-fields of Pennsylvania would be scenes of monumental pride.* It was my expectation to enrich this Memoir with biographical sketches of the distinguished Pennsylvanians who are incidentally referred to, omitting of course those already before the public. In some instances I have been enabled to do so, but it is a matter of extreme regret that my work is not in this respect more complete.

It will be borne in mind, that, with the exception

* Lord Carlisle's letter to George Selwyn, vol. i. p. 380.

of Mr. Graydon's book, this is the first attempt at Pennsylvania biography, or even at Pennsylvania revolutionary history. All that relates to this portion of our annals is not only new, but has been evolved from original materials with great labour, and at the risk to which a first inquirer is always more or less exposed. These were times of extreme political asperity; which very much increases the difficulty of reaching just results, and Philadelphia seems to have been the whirlpool where the angry eddies of political controversy most violently converged. Knowing that Mr. Reed was a political leader of his times, and was liable to all those errors of opinion and conduct to which a leader is exposed, it has been my anxious desire to have access to the papers and correspondence of those who held different opinions, that I might from them see "the other side" of local politics, and form a fair judgment. In one instance only, have I succeeded, that of Mr. Morris, to whose daughter, Mrs. Nixon, I am happy to return my thanks for kindly showing me a portion of the papers in her possession. There must be in Philadelphia, and its neighbourhood, large collections of original papers of great interest, which the carelessness or indifference of those to whom they belong is allowing rapidly to decay and perish. As a Pennsylvania book,—a history, incidental to personal narrative, of the State during the Revolution, and especially during Mr. Reed's executive administration, from

1778 to 1781, no pains have been spared to make this work as complete as possible.

Mr. Reed acted on a larger stage, than that of State politics. As the head of a State government, his relations to the Nation, and what was then known as the Union, were very intimate, much more so than those of a State executive at the present day. Under the Confederation, there was properly "State Sovereignty," not confined to narrow municipal concerns, but actually independent of any substantive controlling power; and the administrator of that Sovereignty was a more important functionary than the Governor of one of the United States can be under "The more perfect Union," of the Constitution. In the early part of Mr. Reed's life, from 1775 to 1778, he was altogether in Continental service, and as Secretary to Washington and Adjutant-General, in positions of great interest and responsibility.

It will be seen that this work is composed mainly of original correspondence and documentary matter. For this, to the discriminating reader, I am sure no apology is needed. The narrative is meant to be merely explanatory. Original letters are published without alteration or suppression, except where this is indicated, or where, in familiar letters, there seemed to be too minute a reference to domestic details.

In the preparation of this work, I have incurred

obligations to many friends at home and at a distance, for assistance of various kinds,—information and advice,—which it gives me much pleasure to acknowledge. To one whose memory of the past was vivid, and whose intellectual activity continued to the last moment of his life, who had a filial pride in my work, the expression of my affectionate gratitude comes now too late. It would have been a matter of extreme gratification to me to have published the work during the lifetime of my father, but it has been ordered otherwise, and I may be permitted, in the incidental expression of grateful affection, to record the aid and judicious counsel which, merely as an author, I received from him. One other individual, one of my immediate fellow-citizens, has very materially assisted me. I allude to Mr. Thomas Biddle, who, actuated by intelligent pride in a revolutionary lineage, has furnished more valuable and accurate traditionary information of days and men gone by, than I have derived from any other source. With strong scepticism as to what is dignified with the name of tradition, and a resolute determination as far as possible to verify what reached me in this form by written evidence, I have been unable to detect, in all that I have thus derived from Mr. Biddle, the least inaccuracy. He has explained to me much that the record left perplexed. Among the published materials to which I have most frequently referred is the Pennsylvania Register,

edited by Mr. Samuel Hazard, a work which contains on its modest pages more curious matter with reference to local and revolutionary history than is to be found anywhere else. I am glad of the occasion to do full justice to Mr. Hazard's valuable labours. To my friends Mr. Thomas Sergeant, Mr. E. D. Ingraham, Mr. C. C. Biddle, Mr. J. Francis Fisher, Mr. John Jordan, Doctor Elwyn, Mr. William A. Irvine, Doctor Darlington, Mr. Isaac Wayne, Mr. William P. Foulke, and Mr. W. Duane, I am under great obligations.

To friends at a distance, I have much gratitude to express, especially to Professor Sparks, whom I have always found ready and able to assist me, and to Mr. Bancroft, who, when in this country, kindly furnished me with much that was interesting and original with reference to the British Commission of 1778, and who since his residence abroad has continued his good offices. His predecessor, Mr. M'Lane, was instrumental in securing me access to the family archives of the Dartmouth family, and the vexatious accident which has deprived me of the use of the papers to which I refer, does not in any way diminish my gratitude to him, and the present Earl of Dartmouth, for the facilities they have been so good as to afford me. Mr. Force's valuable collection at Washington, the most complete probably in this country, as well as that of the Historical Society of New York, has been at all times open to

me. To Mr. Charles F. Adams of Boston, Charles Carter Lee of Virginia, and the family of General Greene, I am also much indebted.

Whilst these volumes were in the press, I received from the office of the coast survey at Washington an engraved and a manuscript map made from topographical examination of the military operations in West Jersey and Long Island. They were prepared under the immediate supervision of Lieutenant A. A. Humphreys of the U. S. Topographical Corps, to whom and to Mr. A. D. Bache I am happy to return my most sincere thanks. It is a matter of regret that circumstances beyond my control have prevented me from using the materials thus kindly furnished.

This work is written under one predominant sentiment, that of grateful reverence for the memory of our revolutionary men, and in rational and patriotic pride in their example. There never was a purer cause, or one sustained in a more manly spirit. It was not merely fierce and stubborn in its resistance, but it was the spirit of reasoning humanity, which could define and comprehended every right that was asserted. It was the spirit which Mr. Burke seventy years ago, speaking of America said, he did not wish to break, "because it is the spirit that has made the country." For those who have no sympathy with this sentiment, these volumes will have few attractions.

As this Preface is passing through the press, I have succeeded in recovering the missing package of copies furnished to me by Lord Dartmouth. They were found in the Post Office Department at Washington, having been accidentally misdirected. They correspond generally with the draughts in my possession. One letter only is added to the series, that of the 18th July, 1774, which is as follows.

MR. REED TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.

Philadelphia, July 18, 1774.

My LORD,

Every week seems to bring with it some new event so interesting to your Lordship's Administration and the public concern, that I apprehend the earliest intelligence cannot but be acceptable. Since I had the honour of addressing my last letter, the project of establishing a new Post Office in opposition to that of Government has been attempted, but it met with such instant discouragement and rejection that your Lordship may be assured no such measure will receive any countenance here, unless indeed there should be an interference of Government, so as to affect public or private correspondence. I have taken some pains to discover how this project met with such notice in other Provinces, and have the utmost reason to believe that very undue methods were taken to persuade one town and Province that others had warmly engaged in it; thus they were used to draw in each other. The distress of Boston, and the apprehension that each Province may suffer the like calamity, has kindled a spirit in this country that I fear will render your Lordship's Administration a very troubled scene. The failure of the last Non-Importation Agreement to procure the whole relief expected, has upon this occasion produced a new mode of operation more likely to be lasting, and prejudicial to the Mother Country. Instead of calling upon merchants to enter into this agreement, the application is to the farmers and consumers of goods. When the difficulty of engaging persons in this rank of life in subjects of this kind, or of

their sufficiently understanding them, is considered, I really thought it would have been insuperable. But Deputies have come down to this City from the several Counties, forming a sort of Provincial Convention, who declare the sentiments of the inhabitants to be for a general Non-Importation and Non-Exportation to Great Britain, and that they will form associations for this purpose. Some Resolutions have been framed by this Convention as expressive of the sense of the Province, which I hoped to have been able to have sent you by this conveyance. Several of them I make no doubt will sound strangely from this Province, which has hitherto been distinguished for its moderation. As I had an opportunity of opposing them in that Assembly, I thought it my duty to do so, but it was in vain. It must be left to time, and the wisdom of future councils in England and America, to reduce propositions adopted in the first stage of opposition to a more cool and proper consistency. An attempt is making here to draw what is called the necessary and equitable line between the Mother Country and the Colonies, to be conveyed under the form of instructions to the Representatives in Assembly. It proposes to offer an equivalent for the obnoxious taxes, to procure a renunciation from the Mother Country of the right of taxation, of internal legislation, the withdrawing the forces, and the relief of Boston. But as it seems rather to advance the Colonial claims than diminish them, I fear, if it should be adopted by the Congress, it would meet with an unkind reception. As soon as it is perfect I will forward it to your Lordship; it being the work principally of the gentlemen who wrote the Farmer's Letters, its ingenuity will doubtless deserve attention, though it will not secure success.

The General Assembly meet here this day, and I shall endeavour to give your Lordship as early information as possible of such occurrences as may be material. In the mean time I remain, with great respect,

Your Lordship's most obliged

And obedient humble servant,

Jos. REED.

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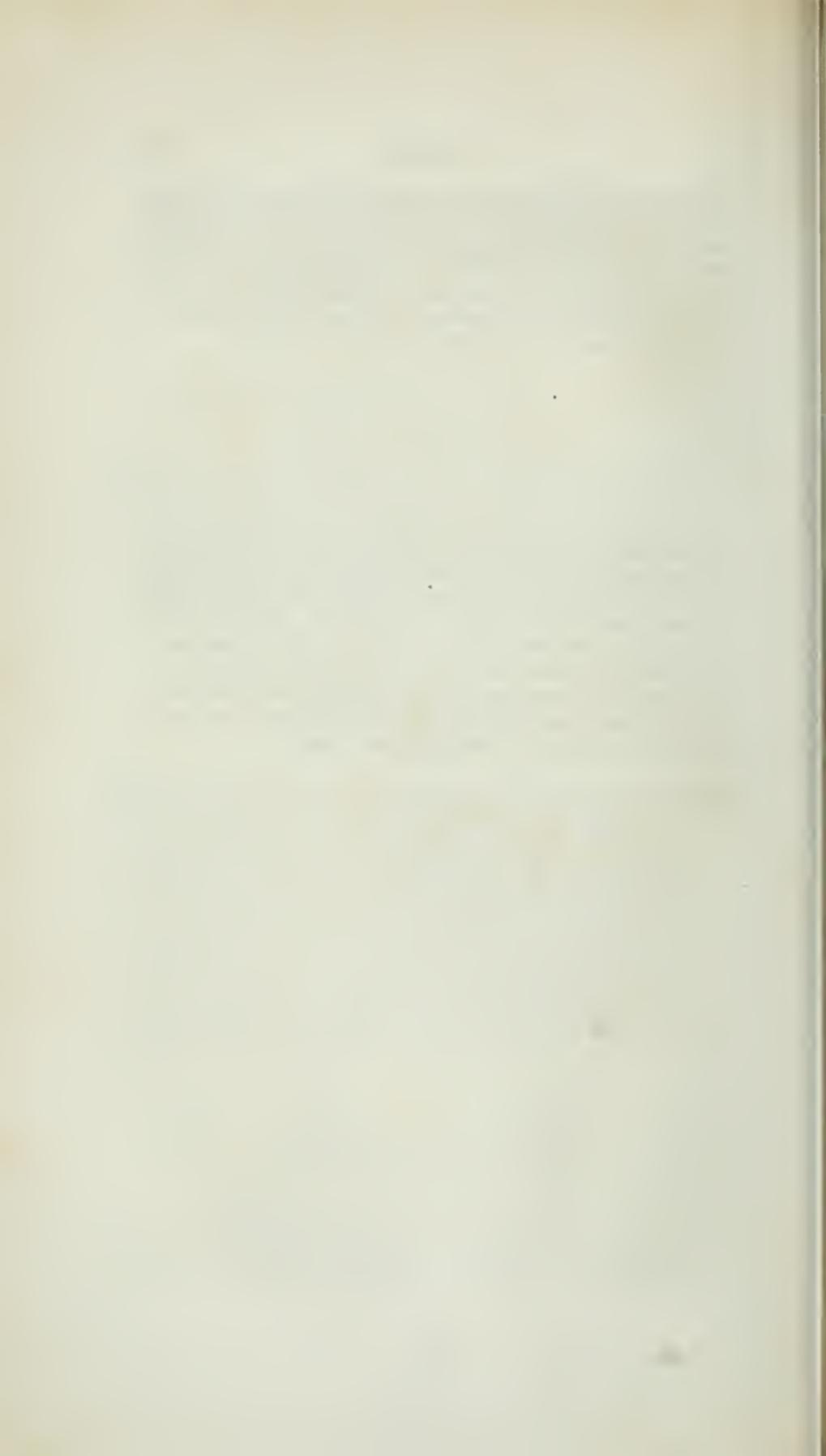
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LIFE
AND
CORRESPONDENCE
OF
JOSEPH REED.

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THESE volumes illustrate a public life which had its full share of the anxious responsibilities of Revolutionary times. How these responsibilities were met, it is my object to show, exhibiting the times and the character of the men who adorned them, as far as possible, in their own acts and writings. The History of the Revolution is not written, and cannot be, till the biographies of the men who made the Revolution are completed. Their virtues and trials best appear in revelations of private and familiar intercourse—in communion with their confidential friends and families. The secret thoughts which there were breathed, the burning words which the patriot wrote, not for the public or a constituency, but for a wife, a father or a brother, are the true memorials out of which History, by and by, will frame her narrative.

A life which the severe endurance of the times abridged within narrow limits, and which was devoted mainly to the public service, will be illustrated in these pages. It was a life of unremitting action.

JOSEPH REED, the son of Andrew Reed and Theodosia Bowes, was born at Trenton, in the Province of New Jersey, on the 27th August, 1741. Nothing further is known of his ancestry than that his grandfather emigrated from Carrickfergus, and that his father was a respectable storekeeper, the merchant of those times, in the village of Trenton. Soon after the birth of his son, Mr. Andrew Reed removed to Philadelphia, where he continued to reside until some time after 1752, when he returned with his family to Trenton. The ancient titles of real estate in this City show him to have been one of the Trustees of the Third Presbyterian, or Arch Street Church, and he is believed to have been a man of consideration, and according to the moderate standard of those days, of wealth. His son's education appears to have been the object of early and unceasing solicitude. No pains or expense were spared. The boy was first at the Philadelphia Academy, under the care of Dove, a celebrated instructor of those days, and was subsequently entered as a student at Princeton, where he took his Bachelor's degree in October, 1757, at the early age of sixteen. On this occasion, an original oration in Latin was delivered by the young graduate, in which he states in general terms the course of study pursued in the College, and with rather more felicity than usually characterizes such productions, celebrates the praises of classical antiquity. With the addition of some answers delivered in public to questions in divinity, according to the system of the times, this is the only academical exercise which has been preserved. Mr. Reed's education qualified him for that class of highly-educated men, who, entering public life at the beginning of the Colonial difficulties, rose above the level of vulgar agitators, and as men of study and accomplished intelligence attracted the admiration of the world to higher qualities than mere animal courage. The leaders of the Revolution were, as a general rule, men of high classical education,

and few among them had greater opportunities of varied cultivation or more improved them than Mr. Reed.

Among his college associates, the only one with whom he formed relations that survived academic intercourse was Stephen Sayre, an individual who, within a few years, gained transient notoriety in the political squabbles of the Mother Country, was elected one of the Sheriffs of London, was a companion of Wilkes, a correspondent of Lord Chatham and Charles Townshend, and in the year 1775 was committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason. With Sayre, Mr. Reed kept up for several years a constant correspondence, portions of which will be referred to, in the course of the memoir, but in their mature years the intimacy seems to have entirely died away. There are many yet living who recollect this strange and restless cosmopolite, who, beginning his career as a radical in England, ended it as a noisy supporter of the administration of Mr. Jefferson and a virulent opponent of the Washington Federalists.*

* Stephen Sayre was a native of Long Island, and graduated at Princeton. In 1766 he was, as appears from letters in my possession, a sort of land-agent and correspondent of Charles Townshend, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. In 1774 being in England, in the intensity of the Wilkes excitement, Sayre and William Lee, two Americans, were elected Sheriffs of London. At this time he was a bustling partisan, active, it would seem, on the side of the liberties of his native country, and in strict communion with the opposition leaders. He appears to have been on terms of friendly association with Lord Chatham (*Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 349—360). In 1775 Mr. Sayre was committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason, on the absurd allegation of a plan to seize the King on his way to Parliament, and to overturn the Government by bribing the Guards. After a close and severe confinement of five days, he was discharged on Habeas Corpus by Lord Mansfield. In the 20th volume State Trials, 1286, is a report of the action for false imprisonment brought by Sayre against Lord Rochford. The jury found a verdict for £1000, subject to the opinion of the Court on a point of law, which was subsequently ruled in favour of the defendant, and the verdict set aside. (2 W. Blackstone, 1165.) Horace Walpole gives a very grotesque account of this affair in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, (vol. ii. 340.) The most detailed narrative, however, will be found in the State Trials and Annual Register. General Howe discovered in Mr. Cushing's house, in Boston, in 1775, a number of letters from Franklin and Sayre, which were sent to the ministry, to show "the train carried on by these gentlemen to stir up this country into a rebellion." (*Washington's Works*, iii. 186.) In 1777 Sayre accompanied Arthur Lee on his mission to the court of Frederick the Great, and was there at the time of the robbery of the American Legation. (*Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii. 65-79.) Wraxall (*Posthumous Memoirs*, 436), who was in Berlin at the time, speaks of the robbery as having been committed on Sayre, and attributes it to the British Minister. There is ex-

On leaving college, Reed began the study of the law, under the care of Richard Stockton, one of the most eminent lawyers of the Province, and in May, 1763, was admitted to practice. Thus far his early manhood had been passed in a narrow and secluded provincial neighbourhood, without objects to stimulate ambition to higher aims than eminence among the few competitors who were around him. But it was in this seclusion that the future man of action was formed.

Professional education was not, however, at that time, thought complete without the advantages which attendance on the Inns of Court was supposed to confer, and many of the young lawyers, at least in the Middle Colonies, added two years' study at the Temple to the regular period of instruction at home. Mr. Reed sailed for England in the summer of 1763, and remained a student in the Middle Temple until the spring of 1765.*

Little of the correspondence with his friends in America, during his absence, has been preserved. The impressions of a scene so novel, so different from that which colonial life exhibited on a mind of intelligence and susceptibility, would have been highly interesting: and the numerous and long letters acknowledged by his correspondents, show that, although a recluse and assiduous student, he found time to communicate to

tant a MS. narrative on the subject, drawn up, many years after, by Sayre himself, which, with due allowance for the self-glorification that pervades it, is curious and interesting. It is in the possession of William J. Duane, Esq.

In 1780 Mr. Sayre was in St. Petersburg, active and troublesome as ever. In Lord Malmesbury's Correspondence, recently published, (vol. i. 328,) he describes Sayre as instrumental in giving currency to the rumour of an attempt on the part of agents of the British government to set fire to the Russian fleet at Cronstadt. He (Lord M.) made Sayre's conduct the subject of direct remonstrance to the Empress, and appears to have been vexed that more notice was not taken of it. After the peace of 1783, Mr. Sayre returned to America, and resided at Point Breeze near Bordentown, afterwards the seat of Joseph Bonaparte. In 1795 he was an active opponent of the administration of General Washington, and had a large share in the attacks on Jay's Treaty. (*Gibbs's Wolcott*, vol. i. 247.) Professor George Tucker tells me he remembers seeing him at Richmond, where it was understood, he was an agent of Miranda. He died in Virginia about the year 1820. A life of more singular though profitless variety is rarely found.

* In wandering through the beautiful Temple Church, a few years ago, the author's eye was attracted by cenotaphs erected to the memory of more than one

his relatives, and the friends whom he had left at home, his opinions on the events of the time, and the varying scene upon which he had full opportunity to speculate. The relations between the Colonies and the Mother Country about this time began to be involved. The impositions on the West India trade had just been laid; a branch of commerce all-important to the Colonies, and far from disadvantageous to the Mother Country, was in great measure destroyed, and the idea of raising revenue by Colonial Taxation had been matured by the adoption of the original Stamp-Tax Resolutions. The merchants in America were becoming daily more restless. Mr. Reed's friends, many of whom were engaged in business, and all of whom felt an interest in the course which Government might adopt, constantly applied to him for information, as well as for his own opinions of probable results. Every letter breathes deep resentment, and the following extracts, made from this

American student of law. Mr. Reed's certificate of membership, and memorandum of expenses, are as follows :

Die 16 Decembris, 1763.

Ma. Josephus Reed, filius natu maximus Andreæ Reed, de Trenton, in comitatu Hunterdon, in provincia New Jersey in America, Armigeri, admissus est in societatem, Medii Templi, Londini, specialiter

Et dat. pro fin.	4 0 0
pro fædo et impressionibus,	2 14 6
£6 14 6	

Cop. Ex.

Matt. Kenrick,

Chs. Hopkins,

Treasurer.

Sub-treas:

Entrance into y^e Temple £6, 14, 6. Butler's fee on entering, £1 1. Furniture for breakfast, 17s. 6. Clerk of Temple, 10s. 6. Butler's fee for going into commons, 10s. 6. Cook's do. 15s. 6. Commons do., 4s. 4. Rent of furnished chambers, £22. Laundress to make beds and cleaning, £6. Porter to clean shoes and brush cloaks, 5, 5. Washing, 10, 10. Doorkeeper of H. of Lords for cases, 1, 1. Do. for K. B., 1, 11. Do. for C. B., 1, 1. Garden key, 15s.

Mr. Reed's residence and place of study was Garden Court, Middle Temple.

I regret my inability to refer particularly to the course of Mr. Reed's professional studies at home or abroad, the only memorials of which that have come to my hands being a species of common-place book of no especial interest, evidently made in London, and carefully interleaved copies of Bathurst's *Nisi Prius* and Gilbert's *Evidence*, every page of which is carefully and fully annotated.

miscellaneous correspondence, the letters of intelligent and practical men, are interesting, as exhibiting the general tone of feeling in the Middle Colonies, and the modes of redress that suggested themselves, long before the final one of resistance was dreamed of.

There is no more curious chapter of our history than that which delineates the gradual, (for it was very gradual,) extinction of loyalty in the American Colonies. The following extracts tell their own tale, and are interesting from the primitive character of their details,—the great incidents of provincial life.

Richard Stockton, who twelve years afterwards signed the Declaration of Independence, in April, 1764, thus writes to his young friend in London.

MR. STOCKTON TO MR. REED.

Princeton, April 8, 1764.

"I am greatly concerned that the Colonies are likely to have such incumbrances laid upon them. I believe they must each of them send one or two of their most ingenious fellows, and enable them to get into the House of Commons, and maintain them there till they can maintain themselves, or else we shall be fleeced to some purpose."

In another letter, in the same year, (8th Oct., 1764,) he says:—

"What I hinted in my last respecting the Colonies sending some of their gentlemen, in order to get them into the House of Commons, I conclude must be the work of time. After the Mother Country shall have added one oppressive measure to another, and after our Colleges shall have thrown into the lower Houses of Assembly men of more foresight and understanding than they now can boast of, perhaps the time may come; you, who are ten years younger than I am, will stand a fairer chance of seeing, and being concerned in it, than I shall."

At the same date with Mr. Stockton's first letter, (April, 1764,) a commercial friend thus writes.

MR. DANIEL COXE TO MR. REED.

Trenton, April 12, 1764.

"What, in the name of sense, has possessed the English nation, or rather its Parliament? for I find a paragraph in the last papers that a scheme is on

foot for obliging us to furnish 500,000*l.* sterling among the Colonies. My God, what madness this is: think they that we are any ways able to raise that sum, or half of it? How are we to do it? Our trade is confined and limited: the only channel by which wealth can flow into us. Money we have not in specie; that is all gone to England in remittances, to pay for our dry goods, &c. What else have we to supply its place! They will not take our produce instead, neither will they admit us any manufactoryes, or give any kind of encouragement to it, but on the other hand, check all such schemes. I sincerely believe half the sum, in gold and silver, could not be found in the Country, take it altogether. And unless we are allowed a paper currency, without severe restrictions, they need not send tax-gatherers, for they can gather nothing—never was money so very scarce as now, so much so, that you may venture almost at 20*s.* in the pound without success. It is true that we may afford considerably more than we have yet paid in taxes, but to effect that, let our luxuries and superfluities pay for it, and strike at a serious evil at once: so far it may work for our good, but at the same time we should not be debarred from enlarging our commerce and trade, in order to favour the West Indies, whose members (or rather those who enjoy great estates there, and are members in Parliament,) would sacrifice every other part of North America to aggrandize their own estates. A young child seeks, from its parents, that assistance it wants, and which, from them, it has a right to expect as its natural guardian. America is but in its infant state, unable, of itself, to bear any heavy burdens, though it may much more than we have already, provided, we were free from the debts the late war has occasioned, and which lie heavy on us. Our settlements, here, are generally upon the coast. A large country is at our back, which, if once inhabited, might be a mine of power to England: what can bring this about but the encouragement of trade, and as many manufactures as possible, that would least interfere with those of our Mother Country?—this would introduce vast numbers of people, and, consequently, extend our settlements westward. England now expends immense sums of money, to Norway and Sweden, for their iron, masts, &c. Why cannot she be supplied, with those articles, from hence, for it is well known we are able to do it nearly. A vast inland trade might be opened towards the lakes, that would not only consume quantities of English manufacturees, as dry goods, &c., but, very probably, enlarge our West India trade too. Since Canada has been in our hands, what prodigious increase has been made in the fur trade. These seem to be considerations that ought rather to induce them to be very tender and careful of us, for some time to come, and not to send over among us a set of rascals, for duty officers, who will gnaw upon our vitals, by depriving us of our substance; add to this the numberless offices that will be created—but they seem, somehow, to be afraid we may grow too strong for them, I fancy, and apprehend our independency, or, perhaps, more truly, they seem to understand little of us, our interest or their own respecting us, and what will become of us, I cannot tell if such be their present temper."

The letters of Mr. Reed, in answer to these suggestions and complaints have been lost. One alone has survived, about two months after the adoption of the original resolutions, expressive of an intention to raise revenue by a stamp duty. How far its details are valuable, emanating from a young law student, who viewed the incidents he describes at a distance, and had no personal relations with the individuals to whom he refers, it is of little importance to inquire. They have interest, as embodying the current rumour of the day, and are given with clearness and vivacity.

MR. REED TO MR. PETTIT.*

London, June 11, 1764.

" Your account of the situation of trade agrees with those from other parts of America ; but, I apprehend, the Acts of Parliament, made last session, had not reached you when you wrote. I hope the open trade given to the foreign Islands, though under such duties, will, in some measure, tend to revive it. Petitions properly urged last winter, while those affairs were under the consideration of the Legislature, might have been attended with some degree of success, and possibly procured some abatement, but they will now come too late. Mr. Allen and Mr. Jackson exerted themselves, with great spirit and industry, to moderate and soften the designs of the Ministry, and not without success. Both of them are entitled to a great share of American gratitude. Mr. Jackson, especially, not only as his knowledge, but his influence, gives him a more extensive power to serve them. Many things have occurred, at this juncture, to precipitate this event. But the exaggerated accounts the officers from America have given of its opulence, and our manners of living, have had no small share in it, as it has given them a very high and false idea of our capacity to bear a part in the national expenses. The unpopularity of the present Ministry,† prevents their attempting to raise any new imposition here, and the current expenses of the Kingdom, together with the interest of the national debt, make every species of economy and provision necessary. There are two gentlemen here, whose names, I dare say, will be familiar in America, and serve as a proper contrast to Mr. Jackson and Allen,—these are Huske, and Ellis, late Governor of Georgia ; the

* Charles Pettit had married Mr. Reed's half sister.

† The administration of which, on the withdrawal of Lord Bute, Mr. Grenville became the head, in April, 1763.

former is a flashy, superficial fellow, who, by stock-jobbing, and servility to the Townshend family, has raised himself from poverty and obscurity to a seat in Parliament. The first use he made of it, was to injure the country which gave him being; he has, however, failed in his private views, though his extravagant proposal of raising 500,000*l.* per annum, from the Colonies, met with a good deal of applause; for having disengaged his old patron, Charles Townshend, and the Ministry not happening to want his vote, though they adopted the child, they have taken no notice of the parent,—when he found this was like to be the case, he tacked about, and endeavoured to ward off the stroke he had so much contributed to give the Colonies, but it was then too late, and they laughed at him.* My curiosity and the advantage of hearing these affairs debated, took me often into the House of Commons last winter, when I once had the pleasure of seeing and hearing Mr. Pitt. As to Ellis, he is a man that makes pretensions to a thorough knowledge of America, and its interests, without the least foundation, and though he is distinguished here for the romantic extravagant liberties he gives himself, in conversation, Lord Halifax, who happens to be his god-father, it is said, listens to him as though he was an Oracle of Truth. He has had no small share in the late events, though not so public a one as Huske. His patron has procured him several sinecures that bring him near 800*l.* per annum, but poor Huske has no such good luck; he has ruined himself almost to get into Parliament, and is despised now he is there.”†

In the same letter, he thus refers to the state of things in Pennsylvania, then (as ever) fiercely divided by her local politics.

“The Province of Pennsylvania seems destined to be a scene of contention and disorder at a time when, from all appearances, nothing but harmony and tranquillity might be expected. It was but the other day, the papers were

* Mr. Huske was a native of New Hampshire: a member of this and the succeeding Parliament, and is occasionally referred to in Sir Henry Cavendish's Debates. At that period (1768) he appears to take part with the Colonies. He represented Malden, (Essex) and died in 1773. (*See Hutchinson's History*, p. 137.)

† Henry Ellis was appointed Governor of Georgia in February, 1757, and was succeeded, in October, 1760, by Sir James Wright. “It is to be regretted,” says McCall, in his History of Georgia, “that little can be said of the progress which was made in agriculture and commerce under the administration of Governor Wright's predecessors. The want of talents in Reynolds, and the want of morality and proper exertion in Ellis, occasioned the Colony to be left in a less prosperous condition than they had found it, and the political foresight of Governor Wright was soon evidenced by his judicious arrangements.” (Vol. I., p. 286.)

full of addresses and professions of regard and esteem to your new Governor, and now I find you are in the quondam strain. You may be sure, very full accounts have come over on both sides of the question, but, I believe, nothing has yet transpired from the Ministry. Whether they are waiting for the acceptable petition, to take the Government into the hands of the Crown, or considering what steps are necessary to prevent these bad humours and eruptions, in the body politic, for the future, I believe cannot yet be determined; but as the weakness of the civil authority was a pretext, made before, to send over troops which we are to maintain, you may be sure they will consider every such disorder as an additional argument to prove the necessity of such a measure, and however injured the inhabitants of the frontiers may have been, their Germantown expedition may be the means of saddling their fellow-subjects with an increased expense. As to the general sense of the people, it has hitherto been rather against that side of the question, from the inhuman behaviour to the poor wretches at Lancaster, which, at first, cast such a blot upon their cause, as cannot easily be removed. It has now become a general quarrel."

The closing passage in the letter refers to the massacre of the Indians at Lancaster by the "Paxton Boys," an incident with which the student of provincial history is familiar. The letters that follow, from American correspondents, further and curiously illustrate local perplexities on this side of the Atlantic, no colony being more convulsed by party feuds than Pennsylvania.

DR. JOHN EWING TO MR. REED.

"Philadelphia, 1764.

"As to public affairs, our Province is greatly involved in intestine feuds, at a time, when we should rather unite, one and all, to manage the affairs of our several Governments, with prudence and discretion. A few designing men, having engrossed too much power into their hands, are pushing matters beyond all bounds. There are twenty-two Quakers in our Assembly, at present, who, although they wont absolutely refuse to grant money for the King's use, yet never fail to contrive matters in such a manner as to afford little or no assistance to the poor distressed Frontiers; while our public money is lavishly squandered away in supporting a number of savages, who have been murdering and scalping us for many years past. This has so enraged some desperate young men, who had lost their nearest relations, by these very Indians, to cut off about twenty Indians that lived near Lancaster, who had,

during the war, carried on a constant intercourse with our other enemies; and they came down to Germantown to inquire why Indians, known to be enemies, were supported, even in luxury, with the best that our markets afforded, at the public expense, while they were left in the utmost distress on the Frontiers, in want of the necessities of life. Ample promises were made to them that their grievances should be redressed, upon which they immediately dispersed and went home. These persons have been unjustly represented as endeavouring to overturn Government, when nothing was more distant from their minds. However this matter may be looked upon in Britain, where you know very little of the matter, you may be assured that ninety-nine in an hundred of the Province are firmly persuaded, that they are maintaining our enemies, while our friends back are suffering the greatest extremities, neglected; and that few, but Quakers, think that the Lancaster Indians have suffered any thing but their just deserts. 'Tis not a little surprising to us here, that orders should be sent from the Crown, to apprehend and bring to justice those persons who have cut off that nest of enemies that lived near Lancaster. They never were subjects to his Majesty; were a free, independent state, retaining all the powers of a free state; sat in all our Treaties with the Indians, as one of the tribes belonging to the Six Nations, in alliance with us; they entertained the French and Indian spies—gave intelligence to them of the defenceless state of our Province—furnished them with our Gazette every week, or fortnight—gave them intelligence of all the dispositions of the Province army against them—were frequently with the French and Indians at their forts and towns—supplied them with warlike stores—joined with the strange Indians in their war dances, and in the parties that made incursions on our Frontiers—were ready to take up the hatchet against the English openly, when the French requested it—actually murdered and scalped some of the Frontier inhabitants—insolently boasted of the murders they had committed, when they saw our blood was cooled, after the last Treaty at Lancaster—confessed that they had been at war with us, and would soon be at war with us again, (which accordingly happened,) and even went so far as to put one of their own warriors, Jegarie, to death, because he refused to go to war with them against the English. All these things were known through the Frontier inhabitants, and are since proved upon oath. This occasioned them to be cut off by about forty or fifty persons, collected from all the Frontier counties, though they are called by the name of the little Township of Paxton, where, possibly, the smallest part of them resided. And what surprises us more than all, the accounts we have from England, is, that our Assembly, in a petition they have drawn up, to the King, for a change of Government, should represent this Province in a state of uproar and riot, and when not a man in it has once resisted a single officer of the Government, nor a single act of violence committed, unless you call the Lancaster affair such, although it was no more than going to war with that tribe, as they had done before

with others, without a formal proclamation of war by the Government. I have not time, as you may guess by this scrawl, to write more at this time, but only that I am, yours, &c.

P. S. You may publish the above account of the Lancaster Indians, if you please.

The curious details of a provincial election for members of Assembly, more than eighty years ago, are thus given.

MR. PETTIT TO MR. REED.

"Philadelphia, November 3, 1764.

"I don't remember that I have told you any thing about our late election, which was really a hard fought one, and managed with more decency and good manners than wou'd have been expected from such irritated partisans as appeared as the champions on each side. The most active or rather at the head of the active on the old side, appeared A. James and T. Wharton; and on the new side, John Lawrence seem'd to lead the van. The Dutch Calvinists and the Presbyterians of both Houses I believe to a man assisted the new ticket. The Church were divided and so were the Dutch Lutherans. The Moravians and most of the Quakers were the grand supporters of the old; the McClenaghanites were divided, tho' chiefly of the old side. The poll was opened about 9 in the morning, the 1st of October, and the steps so crowded, till between 11 and 12 at night, that at no time a person could get up in less than a quarter of an hour from his entrance at the bottom, for they could go no faster than the whole column moved. About 3 in the morning, the advocates for the new ticket moved for a close, but (O! fatal mistake!) the old hands kept it open, as they had a reserve of the aged and lame, which could not come in the crowd, and were called up and brought out in chairs and litters, &c., and some who needed no help, between 3 and 6 o'clock, about 200 voters. As both sides took care to have spies all night, the alarm was given to the new ticket men; horsemen and footmen were immediately dispatched to Germantown, &c., and by 9 or 10 o'clock they began to pour in, so that after the move for a close, 7 or 800 votes were procured; about 500 or near it of which were for the new ticket, and they did not close till 3 in the afternoon, and it took them till 1 next day to count them off.

"The new ticket carried all but Harrison and Antis, and Fox and Hughes came in their room; but it is surprising that from upwards of 3900 votes, they shou'd be so near each other. Mr. Willing and Mr. Bryan were

elected Burgesses by a majority of upwards of 100 votes, tho' the whole number was but about 1300. Mr. Franklin died like a philosopher. But Mr. Galloway *agonized in Death*, like a Mortal Deist, who has no Hopes of a Future Existence. The other Counties returned nearly the same members who had served them before, so that the old faction have still considerable majority in the House. Mr. Norris was as usual elected Speaker, but finding the same factious disposition remained, and a resolution to pursue the scheme for a change of the Government, he declined the Chair, and withdrew himself from the House, whereupon Joseph Fox, Esq., was chosen Speaker, but the Governor being absent, (attending his Lower County Assembly,) they dispensed with the form of presenting him for approbation, and went upon business. The first or one of the first resolves they made, was to send Mr. Franklin to London, in the capacity of agent for the Province, to assist Mr. Jackson. The opposition given to this measure, occasioned some debate, in the course of which the new Speaker gave some hints that a debate was needless, as the members had determined the affair without doors. The Gentlemen in the opposition, finding themselves overruled, drew up a protest in form (which you will see in a paper I shall enclose you, directed to be left at the Pennsylvania Coffee House), but could not get it entered on the minutes of the House. Mr. Franklin goes in the Capt. Robinson. Mr. Hamilton I believe will go in the next ship, but in a private capacity. A number of squibs, quarters, and half sheets, were thrown among the populace on the day of election, some so copious as to aim at the general dispute, and others, more confined, to Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Galloway, with now and then a skit at the Doctor, but these had little or no effect."

Early in the spring of 1765, Mr. Reed returned to America, and began the practice of the law in his native place. During his residence in London he had formed an attachment to the daughter of Dennis De Berdt, an eminent merchant, and subsequently, Agent for the Province of Massachusetts Bay.* This

* Mr. De Berdt was a merchant of London, of high personal respectability and credit. The fragments of his private correspondence in my possession, show him to have been a man of a very devotional turn of mind, singularly so, at a time of very loose religious opinions and practice. He was a Dissenter. In November, 1765, on the adjournment of the Stamp Act Congress, he was appointed special agent of Massachusetts, to solicit and pursue the petitions of the General Congress. (*MS. Minute, 7th November, 1765.*) This duty he zealously fulfilled. In 1768 the Massachusetts Assembly voted him £600 sterling, with strong expressions of gratitude. Dr. Franklin, who succeeded him, on his death in 1770 speaks of him as one who, as an honest and faithful agent, was exceedingly troublesome to the ministry. (*Sparks's Franklin*, iv. 504.) The picture to which the following correspondence refers is now in the State House at Boston.

attachment, romantic in its origin, its continuance, and the peculiar circumstances attending it, had an active influence on the early part of Mr. Reed's professional life, and was near being the cause of removing him from his native country, and from the sphere in which he was destined to move with so much distinction. To the marriage of his daughter, and to her settlement in the Colonies, Mr. De Berdt, with prudence in which even youthful passion could find nothing to blame, positively refused his consent, and it was with great difficulty he could be persuaded to accede to an engagement, on condition that his future son-in-law should, at some day not far distant, return and live in Great Britain. To this end all Mr. Reed's wishes and exertions appear for a time to have been directed. On his return home, he found his family affairs in a most distressed and embarrassed situation. His father, worn down with age and infirmity, was on the point of retiring from business, in the course of which he had been the victim of continued misfor-

Boston, June 3, 1780.

SIR.—With most respectful regards to the Honourable Board, I beg their acceptance of the picture of the late Dennis De Berdt, who was a sincere friend as well as an able advocate of the civil and religious liberties of this country. The many eminent services he did for this State at the Court of Great Britain, when he had the honour of appearing there as the Agent to the Honourable House of Representatives, are well known, and of late acknowledged in their letters to him. I have the pleasure to inform you that he left an only son, whose rising usefulness in life does honour to the memory of such a parent, and by his attachment to its interest, endears himself to the friends of America. From the highest esteem to the memory of my deceased friend, I humbly desire that the Council would direct his picture to be placed among the other worthy personages which adorn their chamber, &c. &c.

RICHARD CARY.

To Mr. Speaker Bowdoin,

State of Massachusetts Bay; Council Chamber, June 17, 1780.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board be given to Richard Cary, Esq., for his present of an elegant picture of the late Dennis De Berdt, Esq., formerly agent of the Honourable House of Representatives at the Court of Great Britain, whose good services during his agency, and whose firm attachment to the civil and religious liberty of his country, will ever endear his memory to the friends of America, and that the said picture be placed in the Council Chamber. Attest J. Avery, Dep. Sec.

The great-grandson of Mr. De Berdt, Mr. Dennis De Berdt Hovel, now resides at Clapton, Middlesex, a village in the neighbourhood of London.

tune. The family with which the old gentleman was surrounded, were wholly dependent on him for support, and on the exertions of the son, whose early career had been watched with so much solicitude, the aged father rested every hope for even a competence in the gloomy evening of his life. Nor were these hopes disappointed. His talents and professional knowledge, added to very pleasing manners, soon introduced him into general practice, and in the course of two years he stood on a level in point of reputation, with the most eminent men in the Province. His business became so great that, in one of his letters, he complains of his inability to attend to the many applications that are daily made to him, and yet, with a moderation at which later practitioners will, doubtless, smile, refers to his practice as yielding him an income of, at most, 1000*l.* currency. Notwithstanding the encouraging prospect which was thus opening to him, every thought was directed to England, and his great success seems to have been regarded with complacency, only as increasing the probability of his speedy return. Various plans were devised to enable him to settle in the Mother Country, all of which were happily frustrated. In the year 1765, Mr. Jackson, the Massachusetts agent, was removed from office, and Mr. De Berdt appointed special agent in his place. The advanced age of this gentleman rendering it necessary that he should have assistance in the performance of the duties of his office, he communicated to Mr. Reed his intention to invite him to London, so soon as Massachusetts should make the office permanent, and affix to it an adequate salary. The disturbances in Boston, and the hostilities of the Governor and the Assembly, combined to delay the appointment of an agent on the terms which were desired.

The year 1766, (the Stamp Act having been repealed and the transcendental power of Parliament being discreetly veiled,) was one of comparative repose.* Mr. Reed devoted

* In contrast with the blind fanaticism of British statesmanship at this period, I cannot refrain from alluding to the tone of debate on a recent occasion in Parliament. In 1834 on the Jamaica bill, Sir Robert Peel cited with warm approval Mr. Canning's doctrine on this subject of Parliamentary supremacy over colonies. "I will only say that no feeling of wounded pride, no motive of questionable ex-

himself with great singleness of assiduity to his profession. On one occasion only do I trace any participation in public affairs.

Mr. John Sargent, a merchant of London and member of Parliament from Westlooe in Cornwall, presented to the College at Philadelphia a gold medal to be bestowed on the author of the best essay on "The reciprocal advantages of a perpetual union between Great Britain and her American colonies." Four competitors appeared, and at the commencement in May, 1766, the medal was awarded to Doctor John Morgan. The other writers were Stephen Watts, Francis Hopkinson and Joseph Reed, and the essays were collected and published in a small volume, the names of the authors, with the exception of Mr. Reed's, being appended. He desired that his should be withheld, as the essay had been prepared in two days, and in the hurry of professional business. It is a business-like and manly production, far inferior in ornamental rhetoric to the successful production, but written in a style more in unison with the chastened taste and good judgment of our days. It is principally an argument on the commercial advantages to result from perpetual union.

Despairing of the speedy settlement of the disputes in Massachusetts, in 1769 Mr. Reed determined again to visit England, in the hope that some favourable change might take place which would enable him to remain, or induce Mr. De Berdt to consent to his daughter's making her home in America. Thinking, however, that his presence might effect something, he visited Boston in the summer of 1769, in company with John Dickinson. On arriving there they found every thing in the greatest confusion. The letters of Bernard had just been published, and the public temper seemed to be on the

pediency, nothing short of real, demonstrative necessity shall induce me to moot the awful question of the transcendental power of Parliament over every dependency of the British crown. That transcendental power is an arcanum of empire which ought to be kept back within the penetralia of the Constitution. It exists, but it should be veiled. It should not be produced on trifling occasions, or in cases of petty refractiousness or temporary misconduct. It should be brought forward only in the utmost extremity of the state, when other remedies have failed to stay the raging of some moral or political pestilence." (*Hansard*, vol. 47, p. 767.) This was not the tone in 1765 and 1774.

point of breaking through all control.* Mr. Reed's time appears to have been wholly occupied in making acquaintance with the eminent men who were at that time coming on the stage, with all of whom, particularly Otis and Cushing, he was on terms of intimate and confidential friendship. After remaining in Boston nearly two months, Mr. Reed returned to Trenton, intending immediately to embark. Here he received the intelligence that his father, who had been for some time living in a small village in the neighbourhood, was at the point of death. He hastened to him, and arrived in time to soothe the cares of his dying parent. The following letter shows the affectionate and manly feeling with which he regarded this event.

TO MISS DE BERDT.

Amwell, Dec. 15, 1769.

"This letter, my dearest love, is dated at the country retirement my father chose, after his misfortunes, and where he has spent his time since, in contemplation and books. He has suddenly been seized with a dangerous distemper, that will probably in a few days free him from all earthly cares. I was on the point of taking my passage when the accident happened; but you who so well know and tenderly practise the duties of filial love, will, I am sure, think this a sufficient reason for my delay. I thank God, that amid all the afflictions which Providence laid upon him, he ever supported his character for integrity and honesty; and now meets the approaches of death with a firmness and serenity which show it to be a subject he has long thought of, and an enemy he is prepared to meet. It is an event that in a few years must in the common course of nature have happened, and as I have the approbation of my own heart that I have neglected nothing in my power to support and comfort his declining years, so it will be my consolation that I have stayed to perform the last duties that can be paid him, and seen that nothing has been omitted to lessen his pains, and as far as the best

* On the 6th November, 1769, Samuel Adams wrote to Mr. De Berdt, "I received your favour by Mr. Reed, whose good sense, agreeable conversation, and polite behaviour, entitle him to very great respect and esteem among the best part of the world.

* * * * *

Britain may fall sooner than she is aware, while her colonies who are now struggling for liberty, may survive her fate and tell the story to their children's children."

skill, the kindness of friends, and tenderness of children avail, alleviated the bitter stroke to which sooner or later all must submit. The loss of friends is a tax upon life which must be paid, and which we in our turn subject others to. Every event of this kind only serves to draw the ties of affection closer, and endear those surviving friends in proportion to our sorrow for the loss of others. How much do I feel your absence, my dearest love, on such a melancholy occasion ; that sweet participation and sympathy which is the essence of friendship and love, would teach me to bear affliction, or at least support me under it. And yet, why should I wish you to partake of my sorrows—you whose heart it will ever be my ambition and desire to cheer with joy and inspire with pleasure, for whom I can sacrifice the company of the nearest friends and tenderest connexions of nature, leave all these, my native country, and whatever is thought dearest in life, to return and give you this last and greatest proof of my affection."

Mr. Andrew Reed died the next day, and early in March of the ensuing year, his son embarked from Philadelphia in a vessel bound to Newry.

His views at this time were ill defined, and the result of a second visit to England seemed far from certain. He was unwilling to resign the career which was opening in the colonies, and wholly to abjure the land of his birth ; while on the other hand, inducements of peculiar influence were held out to him by his friends in the mother country. The intelligence of the death of his kind patron Mr. De Berdt, and of the pecuniary embarrassments of his commercial house, which reached Mr. Reed on his arrival, gave to his future life a most fortunate course. The only friend in England, on whose good offices and influence he could rely, being thus no more, and the prospects altered which during former years had been so fair, no choice was left but to return to America. In May, 1770, Mr. Reed was married at St. Luke's Church, in the city of London, and in October of the same year, having remained long enough to assist in closing the affairs of the house, he returned to America, anxious to resume the labour of his profession, and with increased necessity to stimulate him to exertion. Immediately on his return, he removed from Trenton to Philadelphia, and entered anew upon the practice of the law with the most distinguished success.

In public affairs, Mr. Reed thus far had taken no active part. Residing in a small village, he had not felt the immediate operation of the oppressive measures of government, and was

exempt from the excitement of the commercial towns. His correspondence shows, however, the deep interest with which he regarded the approaching struggle.

During his last visit to England he had become intimate with Arthur Lee, then an American student in London, and with several other ardent friends of the colonial cause, with whom he corresponded for many years, receiving from them the intelligence of parliamentary and ministerial movements, and giving them in detail his own views as to the real state of feeling at home. The following is very characteristic.

FROM ARTHUR LEE.

Essex Court, January 18, 1771.

DEAR SIR,—

I rejoice with you on the prospect that opens so fair upon you in Philadelphia; may it be propitious! nor do I think it the least part of your good fortune that the ladies are pleased with their situation. Knowing your tenderness for them and how much they deserve it, I participate with you in the pleasure you must receive from the prospect of their being contented. Let me beg you to return them my warmest wishes for their prosperity and to assure them I ever shall remember them with the highest respect and regard.

Unknown and unworthy as I was, the idea of being agent for Massachusetts Bay never possessed me; I therefore never solicited that honour, and consider'd your recommendation of me as flowing more from your great partiality for me than from an expectation of success. I am now tempted to believe that had I mov'd the rest of my friends here, especially Col. Barre and Mrs. Macauley, to exert themselves in my favour, Dr. Franklin would not have gained so easy a victory. His abilities are so extraordinary that I do not wonder he meets with so much estimation. There is no probability of his departing from hence, but at the irresistible summons of fate; therefore my contingent remainder is of no great value. However, I am infinitely oblig'd to you for your kind endeavours to promote me to what I should really have deemed a very honourable trust.

It grieves me beyond expression that on the day of trial, our countrymen shou'd have prov'd so little attached to any principles of honour, liberty and virtue. We have open'd the eyes of all Europe, only to show them that we submit to be slaves. We have fallen unpitied sacrifices in a contemptible opposition. Hillsborough and Bernard have actually conquered America.

It shocks one to think our spirits cou'd descend to foes so despicable, but that we should submit to them—good God!*

The profusion of goods order'd must arise from the great demand that appears for them; that demand must arise from the people, which shows them willing to acquiesce in those measures which the disuse of British manufactures was meant, and effectually wou'd have oppos'd. Yet I think it is very probable some bankruptcies will ensue in consequence of too copious importation.

I have directed Wade to send you Beawes Lex Mercatoria, and Clerke on Admiralty Courts, which are the only useful books I know on the subject. Bacon is I think pretty full on that title; but I suppose you have him.

Nothing remarkable has happen'd in Westminster Hall of late, but my Lord Mansfield's attempt to revive the old and abhor'r'd prerogative doctrine that juries are in matters of libel to confine their duties to mere matter of fact. Lord Camden has attack'd him upon it, in the House of Lords, and it is expected if Mansfield's heart do not fail him, that they will have a pitched battle before the session ends. Whether we shall have a war or not, is just as uncertain now as ever; the whole business is kept an entire secret for the emolument of the Carlton House Junto, nor can virtue enough be rous'd in either House to enquire into the conduct of negotiations and the state of our affairs, in which the honour, the interest, and the safety of the nation are so deeply concerned. In the mean time there is much bustle, but little preparation. Our enemies are the reverse of us in parade, and I am afraid in preparation. Lord Weymouth has resign'd, for what reason is not known, and there seems to be much difficulty in filling up his place.

The bond of mutual guilt and mutual safety which binds banditti, will, I doubt, prevent the public from reaping any advantage from these quarrels among the king's friends. We shall not be treated with Jemmy Twitcher's preaching. It is supposed the Grenvilles will be taken into favour again as their obnoxious head is no more. The death of the Duke of Bedford renders some aid necessary to administration. It may be some consolation to America that her enemies constitute the first and second class of the most abandon'd and detested men in this kingdom. I had very little doubt, notwithstanding Mrs. Reed's prepossessions, her being well satisfied and pleased with America. I cannot think either of the ladies will regret London, as you settle in Philadelphia, which with all our elegancies has much more virtue. Dennys is very hearty and seems to be diligent and prudent. He tells me he has had some business from Boston, and I hope his diligence and discretion join'd to the respect people have for the memory of his most worthy father, will recommend him sufficiently to procure a comfortable subsistence.

* This refers to the rescinding of the non-importation agreement by the New York merchants. *Life of Lee*, i. 246.

I have seen the opinions of your counsel and am afraid Mr. Dickinson's is not quite so explicit as to induce the trustees to pay the debt.

Begging my best respects to the ladies, and wishing you and them all happiness and honour,

I am, dear sir,

Your sincere friend

And very humble servant,

ARTHUR LEE.

To Mr. Reed.

The dominant party in Great Britain seemed every day less disposed to recede from their pretensions; and the theory of meeting national expenditure by colonial revenue continued to delude the ministry, and gain converts among the people. The firmness of the Colonies had obliged several administrations to abandon the ground they had taken; and in the instance of Mr. Grenville's ministry had occasioned its dismissal, and the success of the Rockingham party. Still the friends of America in England were but qualified friends; and every act of grace was encumbered by some theoretical, or practical oppression which anew excited indignation. If the repeal of the Stamp Act temporarily allayed animosity, the declaratory law re-excited it: and when the adherence of the Colonies to the non-importation agreements compelled the repeal of a great part of Mr. Townshend's Revenue Bill, the duty on tea, and the attempt by the co-operation of the East India Company to enforce it, prevented the revival of the kind feeling which it was peculiarly the interest of the mother country to promote. The obnoxious duty of enforcing the revenue act, devolved on Lord Hillsborough, who, in the year 1767, had been appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies. The means adopted to ensure success, as is well known, completely failed. In 1772 Lord Hillsborough resigned, and Lord Dartmouth was appointed in his place. To this nobleman's administration of the colonial department, the friends of America looked with great anxiety. Having been in office during the Rockingham administration, and having acted in opposition to the succeeding ministry, he was regarded as a friend to liberal measures, and as favourable to the true colonial privilege of exemption from taxation. His appointment

was hailed with joy throughout America, and by those who thought most kindly of his lordship's intentions, was regarded as an unerring omen of returning quiet.*

Among those who indulged in hopes of this kind were Mr. Reed, and his immediate connexions in both countries. Between Mr. De Berdt and Lord Dartmouth there always subsisted an apparently confidential intercourse. The following note, forming part of a correspondence, on the retirement of the latter in 1766, came into Mr. Reed's possession many years after. From its guarded tone, it is easy to see what sort of friendship even the most friendly administration really felt towards the Colonies.

✓ THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH TO MR. DE BERDT.

Sandwell, Aug. 13, 1766.

SIR,—Not having reached home so soon as I expected, I did not receive your letter till yesterday. I cannot help feeling myself much obliged to you for the wishes you express of my continuance in office. It was not, I assure you, without some reluctance that I found myself obliged to quit an employment which was of all others the most agreeable to me, because it brought me acquainted with a very important part of the British Empire, and connected me with a body of my fellow-subjects, among whom, notwithstanding the late excesses, I believe there are many possessed of sound and sober principles both of religion and government; and whom I should always have

* Dr. Franklin, then in London, thought well of the new Secretary. This is apparent from his letters in the summer and fall of 1773, collected in the eighth volume of Mr. Sparks's edition, pp. 10, 18, 19, &c. Writing on the 14th July to his son, "The new sheriffs elect of London, (could you think it?) are both Americans, viz, Mr. Sayre, the New Yorker, and Mr. William Lee, the brother of Dr. Lee. I am glad you stand so well with Lord Dartmouth. I am likewise well with him, but he never spoke to me of augmenting your salary. He is truly a good man and wishes sincerely a good understanding with the Colonies, but does not seem to have strength equal to his wishes. Between you and me, the late measures have been, I suspect very much, the king's own, and he has in some cases a great share of what his friends call *firmness*. Yet by some painstaking and proper management the wrong impressions he has received may be removed, which is perhaps the only chance America has for obtaining soon the redress she aims at. This entirely to yourself." (p. 75.) Franklin's theory of the personal influence of the king was not wrong. The private notes recently published from George III. to Lord North show how he urged his reluctant ministers to measures for which they were made responsible. *Sparks's Washington*, vi. 531.

been happy to have assisted in promoting every wish they could reasonably form consistent with that subjection to the supreme authority of the Mother Country, upon which I think their own, as well as our welfare and prosperity much depend, and which, upon the present principles of the general constitution, they undoubtedly owe.

I should have been glad to have continued on any footing that would have put it in my power to be of real use, but after having been refused the only thing that in my opinion could have enabled me to be of any service,* without the offer of any other method of removing my difficulties, I thought it best to withdraw myself from expectations which it would not be in my power to answer. I trust that the affairs of all the kingdoms of the earth are in the hands of one who has both wisdom and power to direct them.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

DARTMOUTH.

After the death of Mr. De Berdt, his son, also a merchant of London, continued the intimacy with Lord Dartmouth, and, believing him to be favourable to the cause of America, anticipated much good from his re-appointment. Others, Arthur Lee for instance, whose judgments were uninfluenced by personal considerations, were less sanguine.

ARTHUR LEE TO MR. REED.

London, Feb. 18, 1773.

"A general state of quiescence seems to prevail over the whole Empire, Boston only excepted. I admire the perseverance with which they pursue the object of having their violated rights redressed. The late change in the American Department promised more in that way than I believe it will fulfil. I remember our good old friend was much hurt at that noble Lord's apostacy from the public cause, and I am apt to think he will not attempt any thing in our favour that will hazard his place. If the experience we have had of the total extinction of public justice in this country, with respect to us, should make us provide more for the security of our rights, and the maintenance of our independence, it will be much for our honour and happiness. We shall have opportunities enough of asserting with success our title to constitutional freedom."

* On the back of this letter is written, "This only thing, it seems, was a Royal promise there should be a third department of Secretary of State for America, and that my Lord should be the person to fill it up, and have immediate access to the King."

This letter thus concludes :

"The late decision in the King's Bench respecting negroes, though it went upon the narrow ground of denying any right of seizing any man within the realm by force, and carrying him out, yet is generally felt as putting a negative on the existence of slavery in this country. Yet such is the influence of a few African merchants, that our Assembly cannot obtain the King's consent to prohibit so pernicious and inhuman a trade in Virginia. This is one instance in which we feel the galling yoke of dependence. I dare say the ladies hardly think of poor old England any longer. It is more natural to worship the rising than the setting sun, and certainly America is the former.

"There is not any thing lately published in our way, but we shall hear from Master Burrows soon. The old chief still maintains his ground in Westminster Hall. The Chancellor is the ridicule of the profession, and the new Chief Baron is little better. We shall soon have twelve such Judges as England never saw before."*

Lord Dartmouth's career in Parliament, to the period of his appointment, justified the favourable opinion which the friends of the Colonies, in both countries, held in regard to him ; and it was believed by many, that if pure sources of information could be opened respecting the actual condition of the Colonies, and the spirit that actuated them, the Minister would acknowledge not only the justice but the policy of conciliatory measures, if not of a total abandonment of the Colonial taxation and Revenue Theory. Mr. De Berdt, the younger, was naturally very anxious to promote a restoration of harmony. In his letters to Mr. Reed, he urged on him the advantages which must result, if the Secretary could receive information as to the state of America, from some one who, anxious for reconciliation, would be averse to a sacrifice of even the smallest of the Colonial privileges, and assured him that he had received from Lord Dartmouth an intimation that such a correspondence would be highly acceptable. To the proposal thus made Mr. Reed with diffidence acceded. He saw the probable advantages to both countries, particularly to the Colonies, from a ready access to the Ministerial ear ; and, whilst he felt the diffi-

* Lord Apsley and Sir S. S. Smyth, and the case of Stewart vs. Somerset, in "Loft's Reports." See *Lord Campbell's Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, v. 449. Lond. Ed.

culty of conducting such an intercourse with the caution and propriety which were requisite, and without exposure to suspicion, he could not, in justice to his country and himself, decline an offer of so flattering a nature. In writing to Mr. De Berdt on the subject of Mr. Townshend's commercial restrictions, he says,—

MR. REED TO MR. DE BERDT.

Philadelphia, January 4, 1772.

"Lord Dartmouth might make himself exceedingly popular in America, by removing these and other restrictions, which make the acts a mere nullity. I have often had thoughts of making his Lordship a tender of my services in pointing out some things which would be of mutual advantage to both countries, and tend to make his administration honourable and useful. But the difficulty of introducing it in a proper manner, and free from any suspicion of interested views, has hitherto prevented it. The intelligence from this country has generally flowed through such corrupt channels as would expose any Minister to danger and difficulty. I think I could procure his Lordship one or two correspondents in other Provinces, who would, if it was agreeable, render him any services in that way, and who have nothing to ask from him but his cheerful acceptance of their honest and disinterested endeavours to serve both the Mother Country and the Colonies."

The correspondence which ensued is valuable in every aspect. Mr. Reed's position gave him the best means of information; he shared in all the patriotic excitement of the community in which he lived, and was active in securing the adoption of many of the measures to which he refers in his letters. Mr. De Berdt informs us with how much apparent pleasure Mr. Reed's intelligence was received, and we know from history how little real influence anything of the kind had in controlling the prejudices and passions of the anti-colonial administration of Lord North. I have thought it worth while to insert in parallel notes the different intelligence and opinions—unhappily too much relied on—which were communicated by official advisers in this country, especially General Gage, Mr. Penn and Governor Tryon. But few of the former have been published, and for the rest the author is

indebted to the manuscript collections made by Mr. Brodhead for the State of New York in 1840. The complete letters of Governor Penn are no doubt in the State Paper office in London. The contrast of the tone, as well as the narrative of the young Philadelphia lawyer and that of the Royal Governors and military commandants is very curious.

CHAPTER II.

1773—1774.

Mr. Reed's Letters to the Earl of Dartmouth on public affairs — Letter of December 22d, 1773—Mr. Townshend's Revenue Bill—East India Company and tea duty — Arrival of the tea-ships — Letters of 27th December, 1773, and 4th April, 1774—Post-office—Admiralty courts — Destruction of tea at Boston —Dr. Franklin's Examination before the Privy Council—Mr. Wedderburne—Letter to Mr. De Berdt, May, 1774—Effigies burned at Philadelphia.

MR. REED TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.*

Philadelphia, December 22d, 1773.

MY LORD:

The present state of public affairs in this part of America, so nearly affects the ease and honour of your administration, that I cannot but think it my duty on this occasion to break through the common forms which your lordship's rank and my own respect would prescribe, and endeavour to inform you truly and faithfully of our present views and situation. Your lordship, I trust, cannot be ignorant of the principle which has given birth to the present commotion. The Act of 7 Geo. III. imposing duties on paper, glass, tea, &c., being expressly declared to be for the purpose of raising a revenue in America, has been generally considered as a law imposing a tax without the consent of the Americans, and therefore to be resisted. The reasoning upon which this inference is drawn is founded on the distinction between duties for the regulation of trade and raising a revenue and upon the obligation of the colonists to take those articles from Great Britain only. Not

* The drafts of the above letters only are in my possession. They are roughly made, and in some instances so much defaced by interlineations, &c. as to be scarcely intelligible, being evidently drafts and not copies. In some instances, (and these are not published) I have only abstracts. In 1846, Mr. M'Lane, then American Minister in London, at my instance, applied to the present Earl of Dartmouth for complete copies of the original letters. Lord Dartmouth, with prompt courtesy—which I am happy thus publicly to acknowledge—at once furnished them. They were mailed by Mr. John Miller, Henrietta Street, London, in the bag of the American Legation, in September last, and no trace of them has ever since been discovered.

withstanding the many objections to which these positions are liable among speculative men, they are too grateful to America not to be universally received and practised upon. The partial repeal of this act, instead of conciliating, has widened the breach; it has been thought hard that Government should give up the revenue and keep the tax. In this situation we have been gradually sliding into a clandestine trade, which has increased to a very alarming height. It has been deemed a species of patriotism to evade a law which we could not with safety oppose, or submit to, without giving up an essential principle of liberty. If the merchants had confined this illicit trade to the article of tea only, the injury to the Mother Country would not have been so great; but a variety of other articles, such as calicoes, spices, and other India commodities, have accompanied the tea to a very large annual amount. And upon a coast of such extent, all the vigilance and care of the custom-house cannot give it an effectual check. As a proof of this, your lordship may depend upon it that although no tea has been imported here from England, since 1767, there has been no scarcity, nor has the price been enhanced otherwise than by the ordinary course of trade. This is a short sketch of our situation in the Middle Colonies, when advices came that the India Company, under the countenance of Parliament, proposed shipping a quantity of tea to this part of America, to be sold at public sale by factors. The merchants, as might be expected, first expressed their uneasiness, but in a few days it became general. Some of the principal inhabitants and merchants, called a general meeting of the people, when a number of resolves were entered into, the substance of which was, that this measure tending to enforce the obnoxious act, should be opposed by all lawful and proper methods. A number of persons were appointed to desire the consignees to relinquish the consignment. At first they made some little hesitation, but finding the opposition to their acceptance of the trust so strong and general, they all complied, and have publicly renounced the commission. Some inconsiderate persons endeavoured to deter the pilots from taking any charge of the ship in the river, but this has been generally disapproved by the inhabitants, who have endeavoured to counteract it.

When the arrival of the ship was hourly expected, another meeting was held of the principal inhabitants only, when it was unanimously agreed to oppose the landing of the tea, and to compel the master of the ship to return with his cargo. The mode of executing this measure, as I am well informed, will be, that on the first intelligence of her arrival, a number of persons already appointed to that service, will go on board and represent to the captain the determination of the inhabitants on the subject, and the dangers and difficulties which may attend a refusal on his part. This, with the advice of the consignees, will, it is supposed, have the effect intended. If it should not, the consequences may prove very fatal to himself and his vessel.

The opposition to the Stamp Act was not so general, and I cannot but think any attempt at present to crush it would be attended with dreadful effects. Many reasons have concurred at this time, and upon this subject. Those

who are out of trade have been led to think it a point of constitutional liberty deserving a struggle. Those who are in trade, have the additional motive of interest, and dread a monopoly whose extent may destroy one-third of their business. For India goods compose one-third of our importations from England.

I cannot presume to suggest expedients to your Lordship's wisdom and prudence; some proper ones will, I doubt not, occur. Severities have been tried. If it can be thought consistent with the supremacy and dignity of the Mother Country to relax, and adopt lenient measures on this occasion, it would crown your Lordship's administration with unfading honour to be the instrument of closing this remaining source of civil discord. Notwithstanding any contrary representations, I cannot but be firmly persuaded that the repeal of this whole act would ensure the future submission of the inhabitants of this part of America, to any other act of the British Parliament now in force. That an all-wise and overruling Providence may bless and direct your Lordship in this critical occasion, is the ardent wish and prayer of

Your Lordship's most, &c., &c.*

* The Colonial governors, with scarcely an exception, advised coercion and inflexible adherence to the assumptions of Parliament. The student will find their letters or rather such extracts as were laid before Parliament, collected in the first volume of Almon's Debates, in Force's American Archives, and Sparks's Washington. The most temperate and judicious of the governors, appear to be Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire, and Colden of New York. It is in one of the letters of the latter that is to be found a solitary and rather apologetic hint of the expediency of accommodation. On 2d August, 1774, he thus writes to Lord Dartmouth, "From a few of the numerous resolves of the people, in all the Colonies, your Lordship might be led to believe that a stupid, fatal hardness intoxicated the whole. But there are every where many people who are seriously alarmed at the critical posture of the contention between Great Britain and her colonies; they look forward with the deepest anxiety, and would rejoice in any prudent plan for restoring harmony and security, could it be thought consistent with the wisdom of Parliament to lay aside the right of raising money on the subjects in America, and in lieu thereof, that the several American assemblies should grant and secure to the crown a sufficient and permanent supply to pay all the officers and ordinary expenses of government: they are of opinion this would be a ground-work upon which a happy reconciliation might be effected, the dependence of the colonies on Great Britain secured, government maintained, and this destructive contest amicably terminated. For this purpose, they hope an address to his Majesty will be formed at the General Congress." How far Mr. Colden's opinions concurred with those which he thus describes can only be conjectured, as Lord North in laying these papers before the House of Commons, took especial care to say, that "as to the papers containing all the intelligence from America, he would not undertake to say they did, as those he had brought were extracts containing only the facts in the original letters; that the authors' opinions were not mentioned, it having been frequently found that the private opinions of people in office being made public, had been attended with bad

In the latter part of December, the tea-ship arrived in the Delaware, and on the 27th Mr. Reed writes a second letter to the minister.

MR. REED TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.

Philadelphia, December 27, 1773.

MY LORD,—The transactions of this day are of such interesting concern to your Lordship's public character, that I will not trouble you with an apology for giving the earliest information of them. On Saturday, 25th inst., the first certain account was received in this city that the tea-ship was safely arrived in our river, but without any pilot, for notwithstanding the endeavours of many of the inhabitants, such a general aversion and opposition to this measure of sending out the tea prevailed, that no person would afford the captain the least assistance in bringing his ship into the port. Last evening she anchored about three miles below the town, when a number of the inhabitants assembled, and sending for Capt. Ayres, the master of the ship, acquainted him that it was most advisable for him not to proceed to the town, in the present temper of the inhabitants, with his ship, but to come up and inform himself of the situation of things in the city. He accordingly came up, and after conversing with the consignees of the cargo, and other inhabitants, signified his willingness to comply with the sense of the city on this occasion. Accordingly, this morning there was a general assembly of the inhabitants to the amount of several thousand, and among them a great number of the most considerable both in rank and property, when the enclosed resolutions were proposed and agreed to without hesitation.

The vessel was immediately supplied with all necessaries, and in less than two hours set out on her return, and is the bearer of this letter. The enclosed printed paper has been published, and contains a pretty faithful narrative of all the proceedings here relative to this matter; the written paper fell into my hands by accident; the original of which this is a copy was despatched to Boston immediately, by express; these, with other papers I have the honour of sending your Lordship, will give you the best information respecting the affair. As it may be of importance to your Lordship not only to be made acquainted with facts, but with the circumstances, rank and character of those who promote this opposition, it would be improper for me to conceal that it has originated and been conducted by some of the principal inhabitants, and I may safely say countenanced and encouraged by all, as

consequences, therefore his Majesty's servants had determined, for the future, never to mention the private opinion of any person." Of this course Mr. Burke earnestly complained as unjust to all parties. The minister made no reply.—*Parliamentary Register*, p. 31.

there has not been a single publication, nor have I heard one person speak in favour of the measure.*

Your Lordship will judge from these facts how general and unanimous the opinion is, that no article subject to a duty, for the purpose of raising revenue, ought to be received in America. Nor is it confined to this city; your Lordship will see by the papers herewith, that the same opposition is made at New York, Charleston and Boston, and you may rely upon it, the same idea prevails throughout the country. Any further attempt to enforce this act, I am humbly of opinion, must end in blood. We are sensible of our inability to contend with the Mother Country by force, but we are hastening fast to desperate resolutions, and unless internal peace is speedily settled, our most wise and sensible citizens dread the anarchy and confusion that must ensue. This city has been distinguished for its peaceable and regular demeanour, nor has it departed from it on the present occasion, as there have been no mobs, no insults to individuals, no injury to private property; but the frequent appeals to the people must in time occasion a change, and we every day perceive it more and more difficult to repress the rising spirit of the people.

The Quakers compose a considerable and respectable part of this city; though they have not appeared openly in the present opposition, they have given it every private encouragement. The destruction of the tea at Boston has occasioned much speculation in this city, and there is some difference in opinion, but in general their conduct is approved as proceeding from necessity.

If the above information, or any other I can procure should be any way useful to your Lordship, it will give me the most sensible pleasure. If the total repeal of this act is thought of, it is not possible to frame a stronger argument than what arises from the increase of smuggling, by which there is a regular and sufficient supply of tea, and has been for several years, equal to the demand of this whole country. What a loss must this have been to the Mother Country? What an acquisition to a foreign state? From the

* It is probable that this letter from Mr. Reed was the only communication the Ministry received directly from Pennsylvania as to the fate of this tea cargo, for, on the 6th of July, Lord Dartmouth wrote to Governor Penn, "I have received your letters of the 3d and 31st May, and have laid them before the king, and I have the satisfaction to acquaint you that his Majesty is graciously pleased to acquiesce in the apology you make for having omitted to transmit to me an account of the proceedings at Philadelphia on the arrival of the tea ship. By the account contained in your letter of the 31st May of the reception given to the proposal that came from the town of Boston, there did not appear then to be any strong inclination to adopt it. What has since passed in Virginia may perhaps, as in other like instances, become an example to the neighbouring colonies, and should this be the case, it will be your duty to exert every power which the Constitution has placed in your hands to defeat any attempt to trample upon and insult the authority of this kingdom."

best inquiry and computation I can make, the annual consumption of this Province now amounts to two thousand chests of tea, the profits of which have been totally lost to England for upwards of five years. At the lowest computation it cannot be less than £100,000 sterling lost to England from this Province only, and when other articles accompany it, who can tell to what amount it will reach?

Your lordship's goodness will, I hope, excuse my pleading for the country I love. But as on the one hand I will not conceal or misrepresent, so on the other I would wish to avert the impending blow. If it can be done consistently with your lordship's wisdom and judgment, we supplicate your indulgence and kindness at this critical period, when your rank and station may enable you to heal these unhappy breaches, and restore peace and union to these divided countries. I am, with the most unfeigned respect, &c., &c.*

MR. REED TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.

Philadelphia, April 4, 1774.

MY LORD,—As nothing of importance to your public character has occurred since the departure of the Tea-Ship from hence, I would not break in upon your lordship's time and other business. But as there seem to be some designs forming, which in the event may be interesting, and which perhaps a timely interposition may prevent, I beg leave to lay them before your lordship with such observations as have occurred to me, and those with whom I have conversed. It has been no small misfortune to former administrations, that from the distance and interested channels of intelligence, the first notice they have had of opposition to any measure of Government, has been its actual execution, when perhaps by a little temporising and removing real grievances in the mode of conducting it, the measure itself would have been preserved. The first thing of this nature I have to communicate is a design to oppose the Post-Office. There is no Act of Parliament which has been more universally submitted to than this: all objections hitherto have given way to the convenience of the thing. But there are really some grievances in the Post-Office which are worth your lordship's attention, and if redressed will, I am of opinion, engage every judicious and sensible American to support it. In the first place, the rates of postage, which were

* These two letters must have been received by the Minister before he wrote his despatch of the 9th April, 1774 (*Almon*, i. 31), to General Gage, forwarding the Boston Port Bill, and directing its thorough and rigorous execution. On 3d January, 1774, within a week of Mr. Reed's last letter, Governor Tryon writes: "I can form no other opinion than that the landing, storing and safe-keeping of the tea, when stored, can be accomplished, but only under the protection of the point of the bayonet and muzzle of the cannon, and even then, I do not see how the consumption can be effected." *N. Y. MS.*

fixed in Queen Anne's time, continue the same, except an alteration when the distance is short, though the trade, population, and other circumstances of the country are totally changed. It costs more than double the sum to send a letter by the post twenty miles in America, than from one end of England to the other, the lowest rate of postage being 8d. this currency, near 5d. sterling. This has become a most exorbitant tax upon all trade and business, and is a real loss to the revenue, as the postage would amount to much more than it does, from the increase of letters, if it was put on a more reasonable footing. It is universally complained of in every Colony.

In the second place, though it is a received opinion that the post-office in England requires no remittances from America, but has appropriated the surplus after paying expenses to the establishment of new posts, building bridges, and improving the communication between the Colonies, yet not one farthing ever appears to be expended for this purpose or remitted. It therefore seems a heavy assessment from which neither Mother Country nor Colonies receive any benefit, but which sinks nobody knows where. The conduct too of the officers, who have no superiors in this country, and of their under officers, requires constant attention. There are many complaints of rudeness and incivility in the under officers unredressed by their superiors, and it is a certain fact, on which your lordship may rely, that the insolence and ill behaviour of officers have occasioned all the attacks which have been made on the appointments themselves.

The other project now forming is to distress and harass the admiralty courts, so as to make all the offices in them odious and disgraceful. It is to be wished that the mode of trying revenue causes in this country was more agreeable to the English practice, and the English constitution, but at the same time I must acknowledge that at present there seems little probability of justice being done to the crown by an American jury. It is therefore an object well worthy your lordship's attention to make the mode of trial in these courts as honourable and acceptable as may be. Your lordship must have observed that the complaints are levelled against the new courts of admiralty, whilst the old pass unnoticed, though there is no difference as to the objects of their jurisdiction, and the extent of it is not novel. This arises entirely from the creation and conduct of the officers. The first appointment was of judges, who had made themselves obnoxious by their conduct at the time of the Stamp Act. But the same or rather a more absurd conduct has been shown in the appointment of all the under officers. The principals live in England, and I suppose, having an acquaintance with the commissioners at Boston, they have left to them the nomination of the deputies. So that in the court fixed at this place, when Mr. Ingersoll, the judge, opened his court, every officer in it was some underling of the custom-house. The register was the gauger and surveyor, the marshal one of the principal tide-waiters, &c. No measure could have been framed more ready to invite opposition and insure contempt; for these officers are frequently

interested in the causes depending, so that partly for that reason, and partly on account of their incapacity, it often becomes necessary to get indifferent persons to do their duty. The due observance of the laws of trade is so essential to the interests of the Mother Country, that nothing tending to weaken or enforce them is beneath notice. This will apologise for my being so particular, and more especially as the judge has lamented to me his unfortunate situation in this respect.

Except the above, I know of no cloud rising in our political hemisphere, unless our conduct respecting the tea should produce any. Of this your lordship is the best judge. We hope and trust we have not forfeited your lordship's favour and protection; this would be a loss which I am sure every judicious American would deplore, as I may say with great truth, that no minister ever stood better in the affection and esteem of America than your lordship. I am with great respect, &c., &c.

The tranquillity to which the concluding passage of this letter refers was not that of content and security. The public mind was excited by fears of the certain indignation which would prevail in Great Britain on the return of the tea-ships, in relation to which the conduct of the Philadelphians, though less violent, was scarcely less exceptionable, in metropolitan judgment, than that of the citizens of Boston; for it was evident that if the captain and consignees had not yielded readily to the requisitions of the inhabitants, the destruction of the cargo would have ensued. The colonists could not suppose that their refusal to receive the tea would change the policy of the ministry; and they felt a natural solicitude to know what measures would be adopted to punish their disobedience. The quiet of the interval between the departure of the tea and the receipt of definite intelligence from Great Britain was peculiarly the "boding" quiet, in which those who feel themselves the objects of inevitable calamity await the result in anxious silence, uncertain when and where the work of ruin is to begin, and by what means it is to be avoided.*

The first news after the return of the tea-ships was that of the examination of Dr. Franklin before the Privy Council, on

* "The land was then at peace, (it being towards the latter end of the reign of King James,) if that quietness may be called a peace, which was rather like the calm and smooth surface of the sea, whose dark womb is already impregnated of a horrid tempest." *Mrs. Hutchinson's Memoirs*, p. 3.

the publication of Hutchinson's letters, and the fierce attack made on him by the solicitor-general, Mr. Wedderburne.* The excitement, particularly in Philadelphia, produced by this intelligence, showed the irritability of all classes at a time when apparent tranquillity was preserved. The character of the agent stood high with a majority of his constituents, and it was only necessary to make him the immediate object of ministerial insult to secure him universal regard. Even those who in the previous party contests in Pennsylvania had been opposed to Dr. Franklin, now joined in his praises and eulogised the course he had pursued. The newspapers of Philadelphia were filled with invectives against the solicitor-general and his fellow-councillors, who, to use the words of a letter written from London at the time, "seemed to have come as if to a bull-baiting, and who instead of checking the orator's extravagance and censuring the indecency of his attack, by their chuckling and laughing and *loud applause* seemed highly to enjoy it." A comparison with Zanga, whose language Mr. Wedderburne had applied to Dr. Franklin, was thought too favourable, and Iago's villany was selected, by the periodical writers of the day, as the only counterpart to the atrocity of the assault on a man whose age should have rendered him venerable every where. The expression of resentment was not confined to the newspapers. On Tuesday, the 3d May, (1774,) the effigies of Mr. Wedderburne and Governor Hutchinson were carried through the streets of Philadelphia, followed by a large concourse of people, and after night were taken to the coffee-house, and there with the usual ceremonies burned, amidst the acclamations of the multitude.

MR. REED TO MR. DE BERDT.

Philadelphia, May 4th, 1774.

Lord Dartmouth's acceptance of my letters is a sufficient inducement to continue them, as I hope they may be of some use to him, and not prejudice the

* For a very graphic account of this scene, the reader is referred to Doctor Bowring's Memoir of Jeremy Bentham, chapter iii. p. 59. Bentham was present.

real interests of my country. His lordship as yet stands high in the esteem of the Americans, and, however former ministers have affected to despise the good will of this country, it would have much contributed to their honour and ease, if they could have obtained or preserved it. I am extremely sorry to find both by yours and other letters, that severe measures are meditated in consequence of the destruction and return of the tea. The scurrilous treatment of Dr. Franklin is highly resented by all ranks of people, and the report of the council upon that affair is so strange and repugnant to the sense of this country, that we are at a loss to conceive how so respectable a tribunal should have permitted such licentious freedoms with a man of Dr. Franklin's public character and age; or how they could have such an opinion of the letters sent from Boston, as to regard them as having been written in the confidence of private friendship, and as containing nothing reprehensible. Nothing can exceed the veneration in which Dr. Franklin is now held, but the detestation we have of his enemies. I was grieved to see such a report pass unanimously, and Lord Dartmouth present. We are here under no apprehension of any violence. We think the property of the English merchants in this country a sufficient security that no injury will be offered to our property, and as to our persons, the whole force of Great Britain is not sufficient to apprehend them unless taken by surprise; but it is my firm opinion, that those persons who would be marked out for such a sacrifice, so far from flying, would meet the danger, and if they did not rejoice on the occasion, would not repine at what they would esteem a glorious opportunity of sealing their country's liberties with their blood. The unanimity, spirit, and resolution expressed at this time, afford the fullest proof that dreadful consequences must ensue from any hostilities offered. No man with us dares mention receiving the tea, any more than repealing the act with you, and if another cargo should be sent, so far from acting with the same caution, it is my opinion that it would be immediately destroyed, unless accompanied with such a force as might protect it in the landing, but who would dare to sell or buy it!

CHAPTER III.

1774.

Boston Port Bill—Letters from Boston—State of parties and feeling in Philadelphia—Dickinson and Galloway—Charles Thomson—Meeting at the City Tavern, May, 1774—Action of the Governor and Assembly—Letter to Lord Dartmouth, 10th June, 1774—Letter, 25th July, 1774—Congress proposed—Reply of Lord Dartmouth to Mr. Reed, 11th July, 1774, and vindication of his measures—The Congress of 1774—Letter to Lord Dartmouth, 25th September, 1774—Suffolk County Resolutions—Canadians and Indian mercenaries—Quebec Bill—Letter to Mr. De Berdt, 26th September, 1774.

IN March 1774, Lord North introduced into Parliament, the Boston Port Bill, and in the early part of May, the news of its passage reached America.* The conduct of the citizens of

* The perplexity of the ministry, and the embarrassments of the American secretary, appear fully in the following extracts from the Chatham Correspondence. On the 15th March, 1774, Lord Shelburne writes to Lord Chatham: " You will read Lord North's proposition in the newspapers, to change the port from Boston, till the Assembly has indemnified the East India Company, and to enable the king afterwards if he chooses, to restore it. I accidentally met Lord Dartmouth yesterday in a morning visit at Mr. Wilmot's. Without entering into the particular measures in question, he stated with great fairness, and with very little reserve, the difficulties of his situation, the unalterableness of his principles, and his determination to cover America from the present storm to the utmost of his power, even to repealing the act, (the Tea Act,) which I urged upon him as the most expedient step, the first moment he could bring his colleagues to listen to such a measure. This, together with Lord North's language, which Colonel Barré tells me was of a moderate cast, leads me to hope the further measures will not be so hostile as was expected." April 4th, Lord Shelburne writes again: " Enclosed I send you the Boston Port Bill, which underwent a fuller and by all accounts a fairer discussion, on Tuesday, in the House of Lords, than it did in the House of Commons. The debate took a general turn, and Lord Camden in his reply to Lord Mansfield, met the question fully, and even as near the extent of his former principles as he could well do. The remarkable features of the day were the notorious division among the ministry, which was very near avowed; some calling what

Boston, on the receipt of this law, by which they were disfranchised, was perfectly consistent. A town meeting was called in Faneuil Hall, at which Samuel Adams presided, and it was resolved to refuse the terms offered by the ministry, and to yield no point under compulsion. A circular was prepared to the different Provincial Legislatures, recommending the immediate adoption of non-importation and non-exportation agreements, which, said they, "if persisted in, will prove the salvation of North America, and her liberties; whilst on the other hand, if trade be continued, there is high reason to fear that fraud, power, and the most odious oppression, will rise triumphant over right, justice, social happiness and freedom." With this circular, private letters from the most distinguished New England patriots were sent. Mr. Hancock, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Cushing wrote particularly to Mr. Reed and Mr. Mifflin, urging them to stimulate the people of Philadelphia, and imploring their zealous co-operation.

It was not, however, easy to determine what course was the most expedient, in order to secure unanimity in Pennsylvania, and at the same time a clear expression of sympathy. The prominent individuals to whom application was made had a difficult duty to perform. The condition of Pennsylvania, in regard to its domestic politics, was peculiar. No one of the colonies had been more violently agitated by party conflicts. There had been a wearisome series of profitless disputes between the proprietaries and the legislative branch of the colonial government. In the array of parties, the predominant interest had heretofore been the Quakers. This sect, averse in all instances to political change, and to extremities of any kind, by their wealth, their numbers, and

passed at Boston commotion, others open rebellion, a more than disregard to Lord Dartmouth, and somewhat of the same kind to Lord North. Lord Mansfield took upon himself a considerable lead; alleged that it was the last overt act of high treason, proceeding from over-lenity and want of foresight; that it was, however, the luckiest event that could befall this country, for that all might be recovered for compensation to the India Company, he regarded as no object of the bill; that if this act passed, we should be passed the Rubicon; that the Americans would then know that we should temporise no longer; and if it passed with tolerable unanimity, Boston would submit, and all would pass *sine cæde.*"

their respectability, exercised a great and tranquillizing influence. If there had been less of this predominance in the legislative councils, a different result would have ensued, and we might have seen—for the elements were here—the Assembly of Pennsylvania, like that of Virginia, the theatre of exciting and eloquent discussion of colonial rights and modes of relief. As it was, anti-ministerial—certainly revolutionary—doctrines met with comparatively little encouragement. The Friends, during the contests with the governors, had uniformly opposed the proprietary interests. If it had been a class of men whose tempers were less within control, from opposition to the proprietaries, the transition to cordial sympathy with the citizens of Boston, and to alacrity in giving them support, would have been easy. But with all their antipathy to the proprietaries, and the anxiety they had shown, on more occasions than one, to alter their form of colonial government, they shrank from active opposition to the parent country, and scrupulously avoided the contagion of doctrines by any construction or in any degree revolutionary. To bring this influential body of citizens into co-operation of some sort in support of colonial rights, was no easy task.

The first question was, whether there was not sufficient strength, independently of the Quaker interest, to enlist the colony in the ranks of the opposition. There was a large body of citizens who were so decided in their opinions, and so unreserved in the expression of them, as to warrant the belief that they would go to any extreme in support of the inhabitants of Boston. But it was doubtful whether this *Whig* party, as it was then called, was strong enough, without the co-operation of the Friends, to counteract the influence of the open loyalists, and to secure the efficient employment of the energies and resources of the province in the common cause. On this point, a diversity of sentiment appears to have existed among the leading patriots in Philadelphia.

Among these individuals, the most prominent at this time was John Dickinson. He had acquired, not only in Pennsylvania, but throughout the Colonies, a greater reputation, in some respect, than any one of the actors in the opening drama of the

times. In the dispute with Parliament, he had taken an active part in the measures adopted by his fellow-citizens, and by his writings and speeches, at the time of the Stamp Act and the Revenue Bill, had contributed as much as any one to give dignity and importance to the opposition in America. The Farmer's Letters, published in 1767, were read and republished in all the colonies. They were translated abroad. No one of the publications of the day gained greater celebrity. In Pennsylvania, Mr. Dickinson's influence in public affairs was peculiar, in consequence not only of the patriotic part he had always acted, but of his professional reputation, his wealth, and his family connexions. He had been the advocate of the continuance of the proprietary form of colonial government, and having married a lady of a Quaker family, and having been always regarded as a man of caution and conciliation in political struggles, he exercised no slight influence over the leaders of the Friends. By the ardent Whigs, or rather by those who, whilst they regarded independence as a calamity, which every good citizen should sedulously labour to avert, considered submission to any one of the ministerial requisitions as a far greater evil, views of policy different from those of Mr. Dickinson and his friends were entertained. Mr. Dickinson seemed to think that there were degrees of feeling in the various colonies as to the measures of the Mother Country, and that active and open opposition should be delayed until there should be something like a level of sentiment produced. His letters breathe this sentiment; and perhaps it was the expression of such opinions which at the time pleased the cautious and timid, and gave dissatisfaction to those whose temperaments were more ardent, and whose views of policy were so different.* All felt the same solicitude for the result of

* Mr. Dickinson writing to Mr. Quincy about this time, says, "Nothing can throw us into a pernicious confusion but one colony's breaking the line of opposition, by advancing too hastily before the rest. The one which dares to betray the common cause, by rushing forward contrary to the maxims of discipline established by common sense and the experience of ages, will inevitably and utterly perish." Mr. Quincy in answer says, "When time shall have taught wisdom, and past experience shall have fixed boundaries to the movements of a single colony, its intemperate and overhasty strides will be more unpardonable. But if we should unfortunately see one colony under the treble pressure of public oppres-

the pending contest. All felt an aversion to separation,—all devoted attachment to the land of their birth; but there was a material difference as to modes of expression and plans of action.

The Boston Circular, and the private letters which accompanied it, rendered the adoption of decisive measures necessary. Reed and Mifflin,* who alone appear to have received private advices, together with Charles Thomson, who had for many years occupied a conspicuous rank among colonial politicians, conferred immediately as to the proper course to be pursued, and determined on calling, on the evening of the same day, Friday, 20th May, 1774, a meeting of the principal citizens, in the long room at the City Tavern. The result of the experiment they were thus making was matter of reasonable solicitude. Those who wished for a decisive expression of sentiment by the meeting, and the adoption of such resolutions as would encourage their friends in Boston, had great reason to apprehend serious opposition, as well from open opponents as from moderate friends. Those who were in favour of more temperate measures saw in the conflict of opinions, which was inevitable, much to alarm them. Reed and Mifflin were uncertain what course Dickinson would pursue, and knew that unless he appeared at the meeting and countenanced the proceedings, so many would make his absence and implied disapprobation a pretext for indifference, as to render a failure inevitable. That gentleman had probably determined on his course, which was to be present, but, in consistency with his views of the mode of colonial action, to recommend temperate measures, and to allay the excitement which the events of the time and the known eloquence of the partisans of resistance might produce. This determination was not divulged. So anxious, however, did Mr.

sion, rendered impatient by the refinements, delays, and experiments of the Philadelphians; of their less oppressed, and therefore more deliberate brethren; I say, if a colony thus insulted, galled without and vexed within, should seem to advance and ‘break the line of opposition,’ ought it to incur the heavy censure of betraying the common cause?”—*Quincy’s Memoirs*, 172.

* Thomas Mifflin, afterwards General in the continental army, and Governor of Pennsylvania.

Reed and his friends became, that, in company with Thomson and Mifflin, he went to the country residence of Dickinson, with a view to ascertain what his decision was, and in case of any reluctance, to endeavour to remove it. They remained with Mr. Dickinson during a greater part of the day, and having concerted with him a plan of operations, returned to the city, and repaired immediately to the place of meeting, where they were soon joined by their other friends.

The meeting was large, but was composed of the most heterogeneous materials. The proprietary party had sent its representatives;—many of the leading men among the Friends, and the sons of nearly all the officers of government were present; and all awaited with great apparent excitement the opening of the meeting. After the Boston letter was read, Mr. Reed addressed the meeting at some length, and urged the adoption of the most spirited measures. No portion of this speech has been preserved; and I have no means of judging of its character but from the opinion of one of his auditors, who, in a private letter to a friend, speaks of it as being distinguished “for temper, moderation, and pathos.”* He was followed by Thomson and Mifflin; and all urged an immediate and explicit declaration in favour of Boston. The proposition thus made revived the excitement which prevailed in the early part of the evening, and it was with difficulty that order and decorum could so far be preserved as to give Mr. Dickinson an opportunity of being heard. He at last succeeded, and spoke for some time in favour of a less violent expression of feeling, and recommended a petition to the Governor for a meeting of the Assembly. After he had finished, he left the meeting, and on the suggestion of Mr. Thomson, resolutions were adopted, recommending the appointment of a committee to answer the circular from Boston.

On this committee both Dickinson and Reed were named, and the answer to Boston was written by the former. The next measure adopted by the committee, was to prepare a petition to the Governor, requesting him to call the Assembly, which, after

* Charles Thomson's letter to Mr. Drayton. MS.

being signed by nearly one thousand citizens, was presented. As was expected, the prayer of this petition was promptly refused.*

In the beginning of June, the news arrived of the passage of the two acts of Parliament, regulating the government and administration of justice in the Province of Massachusetts; and on the 18th, a town meeting was held in the State House Yard, at which the speakers were the Reverend William Smith, the Provost of the College, Mr. Reed, and Mr. Thomson, and when a congress of deputies from all the colonies was recommended, and a committee appointed to correspond, not only with the other colonies, but with the different counties in Pennsylvania. The Governor's refusal to convoke the Assembly was not regretted, since little good was anticipated from a legislature of which a majority was opposed to the claims of the colonies, and under the control of the speaker, Mr. Galloway, whose leaning to the side of the Mother Country was very notorious. It, however, gave to the patriots a fair pretext for assembling a more efficient body, in the form of a Provincial Convention, which soon met at Philadelphia, although, in the mean time, the Governor, on the rumour of Indian hostilities, had convened the Assembly. The first act of the Convention was to prepare a statement of grievances, in the most decided, yet

* On 31st of May, Governor Penn wrote to Lord Dartmouth (*American Archives*, 1774, p. 368): "I take the opportunity of the packet to acquaint your lordship that as soon as the people of Boston knew of the late act of Parliament for shutting up their port, an express was despatched from thence to this city with a proposal to concur with them in putting a total stop to the importing or exporting any kind of goods whatsoever, until the above act should be repealed. In consequence of this, a considerable number of merchants and others had a meeting at a tavern in this city, where I understand the matter was taken into consideration and debated. The only resolution that I can learn they came into, was to prefer a petition to me to convene the Asembly on the occasion, and I am told a petition has been framed for that purpose, and is now handed about the town to be signed, and will be presented to me in a few days. Should so affrontive an application be made to me, your lordship may be assured I shall treat it as it deserves. I have, however, been informed that the movers of this extraordinary measure had not the most distant expectation of succeeding in it, but that their real scheme was to gain time by it, to see what part the other colonies will take in so critical a conjuncture."

respectful language, and full instructions to the members of the Assembly.

Both of these are from the pen of Mr. Dickinson. Positive determination to resist the claims of the parliamentary right of taxation, perfect respect for the sovereign, and aversion to unconstitutional separation, are their prominent features. The Convention then appointed a corresponding committee, which consisted of John Dickinson, Joseph Reed, and Charles Thomson.

Such were the occurrences in Philadelphia, prior to the meeting of the Assembly in July 1774. What part Mr. Reed took in them after the town meeting, it is impossible exactly to ascertain. Little of his private correspondence remains; and in his letters to Lord Dartmouth, which will now be resumed, he was constrained by the peculiar relation in which his correspondent stood to him. From his private letters it may be seen with how much caution he thought it necessary to address the minister, whose hostility to America was becoming daily less equivocal. These letters to the Secretary, contain, however, a narrative of events, which as coming from a contemporary is full of interest. The next is dated a short time after the preliminary meeting at the City Tavern.

MR. REED TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.

Philadelphia, June 10th, 1774.

MY LORD,—

The engagement I have made to give your lordship a faithful account of the transactions in this city and province, in the distant hope that my communications may be of some use, induce me still to trouble you. My opportunities are such as no officer of government can have, and as I have the most passionate and sincere desire to see a reconciliation between the Mother Country and the Colonies take place, I shall continue writing until I find it disagreeable to your lordship, hoping, I confess, that I may contribute, in some small degree, to enable your lordship to judge with precision, and point out some mode by which these unhappy disputes may be terminated to the satisfaction of both parties.

What I ventured to predict in my last letters, your lordship will find soon to happen, viz., a perfect and complete union between the Colonies to oppose the parliamentary claims of taxation, and relieve the distresses of the town

of Boston. The severity of the administration, and the mode of condemnation, gain them many advocates, even among those who acknowledge their conduct criminal. This union or confederacy, which will probably be the greatest ever seen in this country, will be cemented and fixed in a general congress of deputies from every province, and I am inclined to think that strong efforts will be made to perpetuate it by annual or triennial meetings, a thing which is entirely new. The business proposed for the intended congress is to draw up what upon a former occasion, or perhaps upon any other, would be called a bill of rights. I believe it will also be proposed that a certain number of the deputies go personally to Great Britain on this important errand.

Should this application be treated with neglect or contempt, which in my humble opinion it will not deserve, a general pause of all importation, and even of exportation, and indeed of intercourse, will be proposed, and I believe, succeed, though nothing general of that nature will take place here at present. In the distressing interval to the people of Boston, every measure will be devised and executed to relieve their necessities and support their spirits. For this purpose subscriptions are forming in every part of America to supply their poor with the necessaries of life. Some divisions have arisen in this place, as to the mode of showing our sympathy with Boston; but your lordship may rely upon it that nine-tenths of the inhabitants mean to show their sense of the conduct of the Mother Country towards them, by adopting every prudent measure for their relief; the most encouraging letters are written to them to stand out, and by no means to make the submission required of them, by which the honour of the letter-writers' is pledged to support them. The attack on the post-office, which I mentioned in one of my last, now meets with every encouragement, and I am sometimes inclined to think will, though conducted by a person of very inconsiderable note, soon become general.

I have now before me the several resolutions of all the considerable towns from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to this place, which give it an unexpected encouragement. In this place nothing will be determined on at present, but when the rising spirit of the people is considered, who can tell what they may think of in another month or year? A great assembly of all the inhabitants of this city and county will be held here on next, in consequence of the Governor's refusal to call the Assembly, when, no doubt, resolutions will be taken of opposition to the Parliament, and a concurrence with all the colonies. There was a meeting last night of the most considerable gentlemen of this city both in fortune and ability, as well in office as out, to prepare the business for the ensuing Wednesday. This meeting consisted of persons of the principal denominations, when the proposal of opposition to the claims of Parliament was unanimously agreed to, and though the resolves may not be couched in such warm terms as many others, yet they are formed on the same principles, and your lordship, I think, may consider it as a fixed truth, that all the dreadful consequences of civil war will ensue

before the Americans will submit to the claim of taxation by Parliament; I mention this that your lordship may not be deluded by the suggestions of designing interested people to wait this event, as nothing but force will ever bring it about.*

MR. REED TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.

Philadelphia, July 25th, 1774.

MY LORD,—The weight of influence of this Province and city, in any public measure, is so considerable, that I flatter myself I do not intrude unreasonably on your lordship when I endeavour to give you the earliest intelligence of any proceedings here. In order that your lordship may be able to form a true judgment of the transactions here, and of the consequences which will probably follow, it is necessary to inform you that the issue of the last non-importation agreement having deprived the merchants of that confidence which was reposed in them on former occasions, the body of the people have taken up an idea, and perhaps not without reason, that an opposition resting wholly on them may again fail by the different operation of that all-prevailing principle of self-interest. Hence it has been a great object to engage the country, by which I mean the body of farmers, who compose the strength of these Provinces, and to lay the foundations early of a non-consumption agreement which, if general, will give great effect to a non-importation agreement, as it will then become the interest of the merchant not to import lest his wares should lie upon his hands. It will also have another very important effect; by enlisting the zeal and pride of that order of men, it will increase what I may properly call family manufactures, for as to any other, nothing but that spirit which arises from a sudden im-

* On the 26th June, General Gage wrote to the ministry in a very different strain: "In Boston the greatest pains have been, and are taking to oppose all measures tending to open the port, by flattering the people with assistance from the other provinces—promises of collections and presents to enable them to subsist, and the happy effects of a General Congress, which they make no doubt will force Great Britain into their own terms. On the other hand, several gentlemen, also through fear of the tyranny under which they live, dared not to act or speak, encouraged now by the late resolutions of Government, have ventured to step forth, and are endeavouring to persuade the people to comply with the Act of Parliament, as the only means to save their town from ruin. Till they are pinched, and find they are deceived in their hopes of support by presents and collections, the affair will probably rest in this situation. But the Act must certainly, sooner or later, work its own way. They will not agree to non-importation either in New York or Philadelphia, or even in this province, though I believe a Congress of some sort may be obtained. But when, or how it will be composed is yet at a distance, and after all Boston may get little more than fair words."

pulse of hardship and injustice, can, I am persuaded, effect any thing to the purpose. There are at present great quantities of English cloth and other manufactures in this country ; that, and a spirit of frugality, which may make it fashionable to wear old clothes, will, I believe, induce this Province to go into a non-importation and non-consumption agreement, if advised by Congress, or if the deputies who will be sent to Great Britain to endeavour to settle these unhappy disputes should be treated with contempt and neglect. It is at present the sense of the inhabitants of Pennsylvania that no measure of opposition to the Mother Country should be adopted until other modes have failed of success. The enclosed paper, being the first attempt to draw the line of submission between Great Britain and the Colonies, may not be unworthy your lordship's notice. The first essay of this kind will doubtless contain some things exceptionable ; but your lordship will please to distinguish between those things which are considered essential, and those which may be relinquished for the sake of peace and union. I could have wished some further modification of the former, but not being able to attain it, I endeavoured to leave such a power in the Congress as would remove this difficulty, and enable them to reduce what may be called the American terms to a lower scale, which I did the more readily, as there is no danger of their yielding to the parliamentary claim of taxation,—for if an opposition to this claim is a crime, I do not pretend to acquit myself of it.

It is said that General Gage has orders to interrupt the Congress, and that it is a measure so obnoxious to administration, that it will draw down some new mark of displeasure on these Colonies, and that it denotes union, and therefore ought to be discouraged. If your lordship will be pleased to consider that as yet there is no illegality in the meeting of a number of gentlemen from different Provinces to deliberate upon public affairs, and draw up a decent and proper representation ; that there is no such moral or political evil in it as to justify measures of severity ; that from such an assembly alone, the true and real designs of Americans can be known to the administration, and it is possible that when they come to draw the line, or to settle the different restrictions under which suspension of trade is to take place, they will be made sensible by the suspicions which will necessarily be engendered, and the discordant interests which will be involved, how great are the difficulties of union in any one plan, and thus their demands will become less exceptionable to administration ; and lastly, I may add, by means of this Congress any effusion of blood may be saved ;—when these and other reasons which your lordship's wisdom will suggest, are considered, I should hope that this Congress will not appear in so obnoxious a view.

The General Assembly has been sitting at the same time with the Provincial Committee, several individuals being members of both. They have resolved that a Congress is necessary, for the purpose of concerting some plan for redressing American grievances, ascertaining American rights, and restoring harmony between Great Britain and her colonies. This resolve

was passed in the House of Assembly without a dissenting voice, and they have appointed seven of their number to attend the Congress.* Your lordship must allow me to express my concern that your administration should be thus clouded, and that you should be interrupted in those benevolent plans you had formed for the interest of both countries. Though I have had some share in the transactions in this city, I assure your lordship it has been with reluctance, and if I could be convinced that submission to the claims of Parliament did not virtually and necessarily imply a surrender both for myself and my children of the blessings of liberty, I should have borne testimony against some of the measures pursued. I am sure I speak not only my own sentiments, but the sentiments of the most respectable in this city when I say that there is nothing they so much lament as these unhappy differences, and that they will rejoice to see the old union and affection restored.

Your Lordship's obed't servant.

A few months after Mr. Reed wrote the last letter, he received from the Minister a confidential communication, which appears to be an answer to a letter which has been lost.

THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH TO MR. REED.

SIR—

Having desired Mr. De Berdt to return you my thanks for the information and advices you have done me the favour to communicate, I should have deferred troubling you myself till I might have more leisure to do it, if the very interesting contents of your last of the 30th May, which is just come to my hands, had not made me desirous of saying a few words to you on the present very critical and unpleasant situation of American affairs. Your very candid and ingenuous manner of stating your own sentiments, and those of others with whom you converse, will not suffer me to be silent while I can have the most distant hope of being able to remove any mistakes or misapprehensions you may have entertained of the views and intentions of Great Britain, and of contributing in any degree to the satisfaction of your own mind in a matter which so nearly concerns and so justly alarms every British subject, who thinks at all of his own or his country's welfare. I flatter myself there is not in any part of the King's dominions a more real friend to the constitutional rights and liberties of America than myself; and if that regard to the Colonies which you do me the justice to impute to me

* Joseph Galloway (Speaker), Samuel Rhoads, Thomas Mifflin, Charles Humphries, George Ross, and Edward Biddle.

is in some measure suspended by the uncertainty I am in, of the conduct they will hold, and of the temper they will manifest on the present occasion, I can venture to say that it will never leave my breast, till it is driven thence by the clearest evidence of a determined contempt and disregard of the Mother Country, and a violation of every just and sober principle of law and government. But, I will assure you, I hope better things. I know that the complexion of some measures which have been taken of late in some of the Colonies, has induced a persuasion in the minds of many discreet and dispassionate people, that they have totally forgotten the nature of that connexion by which they are held to the Mother Country, and that they mean not to acknowledge a dependence upon her in any sense whatever : for my own part, I will not believe it till it is no longer to be denied. I will still hope, that principles of another nature prevail in the minds of those who are best entitled to the attention and consideration of their fellow-subjects, and that a little time will convince you and all that can think with coolness and temper, that the liberties of America are not so much in danger from any thing that Parliament has done, or is likely to do here, as from the violence and misconduct of America itself. I am persuaded I need not take pains to convince you of the absurdity of the idea which has been held out to the common people in inflammatory papers on your side of the water, that the intention of Government is to enslave the people of America : we wish you to enjoy all the freedom and all the rights which belong to British subjects, without any restraints except such as necessarily arise from the nature of your situation and connexion with this country. What then is the present case ? The Supreme Legislature of the whole British Empire has laid a duty (no matter for the present whether it has or has not the right so to do, it is sufficient that we conceive it has), on a certain commodity, on its importation into America. The people of America, at Boston, particularly, resist that authority, and oppose the execution of the law in a manner clearly treasonable. Upon the principles of every government upon earth, the Mother Country, very unwilling to proceed to extremities, passes laws (indisputably within its power) for the punishment of the most flagrant offenders, for the reformation of abuses, and for the prevention of like extremities in future. The question then is whether these laws are to be submitted to ? If the people of America say no, they say in effect that they will no longer be a part of the British Empire ; they change the whole ground of the controversy,—they no longer contend that Parliament has not a right to enact a particular provision,—they say that it has no right to consider them as at all within its jurisdiction. If, on the other hand, they are wise enough to submit,—if they prudently acquiesce, and do not repeat the offence which has drawn on them the resentment of the Mother Country, they will infallibly disarm her of that resentment, they will turn her indignation into sympathy and good will, they will open her ears to their complaints ; they will perhaps obtain all they wish, and receive that indulgence and compliance with their desires which they never can extort by sullen opposition or undu-

tiful resistance. You observe that if neither Parliament nor America will recede, the most dreadful consequences will ensue. If that were the case, can any reasonable man have a doubt which of them should recede, or at whose door the guilt of those consequences would lie? But I see no occasion for pushing the matter to that issue, I mean as respects the right of taxation which you are speaking of. If you suppose, as some have done, that the design of the Boston Port Bill is to obtain an express declaration and acknowledgment of that right, you are very much mistaken. I see no such thing in that act. It requires indeed a submission to the provisions of it; and if that submission be duly paid, things will return into their ancient channel, and peace and harmony be restored to this at present most unhappily divided and distracted empire.

I am sorry that the case of Dr. Franklin should have contributed to the discontent of the minds of any people in America. Whatever respect I may have for that gentleman on other accounts, I cannot applaud his conduct on the occasion of Mr. Hutchinson's letters. I pay no regard to inflammatory writings or speeches; every thing that exceeds the bounds of truth and reason, I disregard whatever source it may come from; but if my information be true, (and I cannot suppose it otherwise,) very many of those who are not the most inclined to think favourably of Mr. Hutchinson, are now ashamed of the clamour which has been raised against him on account of those letters, and I am persuaded a time will come, when every body that reads them will be astonished to think they could have been made the ground of a serious accusation against him.

I have very hastily thrown together these thoughts, which have occurred to me upon reading your very obliging letter; if they can contribute in any measure to abate the uneasiness of your mind, it is all I intend by them. I shall be heartily obliged to you for the continuance of your sentiments. It is not necessary for me to describe myself to you more particularly than by assuring you that I am,

Sir,

Your obliged and most obedient
Humble servant,

July 11th, 1774.

"Such," says Mr. Reed in a letter to a friend, "is Lord Dartmouth's confession of faith,—bad enough, God knows."*

* But a month before the date of this letter, Lord Dartmouth had written to General Gage: "To what further extravagance the people may be driven, it is difficult to say. Whatever violences are committed must be resisted with firmness; the constitutional authority of this kingdom over its colonies must be vindicated, and its laws obeyed throughout the whole empire. It is not only its dignity and reputation but its power, nay, its very existence, depends upon the present moment,

In the interval between Lord Dartmouth's letter and Mr. Reed's answer the course of the Colonies had been steadily in advance. The Congress of Deputies from all the provinces met at Philadelphia on the 5th of September, and to the result of its deliberations the colonists looked with the most intense interest; the timid, fearful that the expression of feeling might be pitched too high, and the requisitions be incompatible with their notions of loyalty and constitutional dependence; the patriots, apprehensive of the influence of timid counsellors and the adoption of half-way measures. One result was inevitable, that let the Congress recommend what it might in the way of peaceful resistance, acquiescence would be universal; for, where inclination was wanting, public opinion would operate and effectually secure submission. Mr. Reed, speaking of the arrival of the different members in Philadelphia, says, "We are so taken up with the Congress that we hardly think or talk of any thing else. About fifty have come to town, and more are expected. They have not fixed upon the time of beginning business, but I suppose it will be some day this week. There are some fine fellows come from Virginia, but they are very high. The Bostonians are mere milksops to them. We understand they are the capital men of the colony, both in fortune and understanding. Our news from England is more favourable than we expected. The Quebec Bill has proved very unpopular.* But we dread to hear from Massachusetts. General Gage has marched four hundred men to Salem, to disperse a meeting of the people. The inhabitants of Marblehead and the neighbourhood, to the amount of five or six hundred men, immediately

for should those ideas of independence which some dangerous and ill-designing persons here are artfully endeavouring to instil into the minds of the king's American subjects, once take root, that relation between this kingdom and its colonies which is the bond of peace and power will soon cease to exist, and destruction must follow disunion. It is not the mere claim of exemption from the authority of parliament in a particular case that has brought on the present crisis; it is actual disobedience and open resistance that have compelled coercive measures, and I have no longer any other confidence in the hopes I had entertained that the public peace and tranquillity would be restored, but that which is derived from your abilities, and the reliance I have on your prudence for a wise and discreet exercise of the authorities given to you by the acts which I now send you."

* The Quebec Bill passed the House of Lords, June 16th, 1774.

armed and marched to meet them, so that bloodshed seemed unavoidable, but the troops took so long a time to march to Salem, that the people held their meeting, did their business, and were dispersed before the troops arrived. The Boston delegates are exceedingly distressed, and dread the arrival of every post from the eastward."

The proceedings of the Congress of 1774 are matters of history, to which it would be inconsistent with the object of this memoir particularly to refer. Mr. Reed's correspondence with Lord Dartmouth and other individuals, as well in Great Britain as America, which will now be resumed, contains a succinct narrative of the events of the day illustrated by his own comments and opinions. Soon after the meeting of Congress, Mr. Reed sent an elaborate answer to the Secretary's letter, in which he expresses himself with less reserve, and gives more free utterance to the feelings which agitated him at the sight of hourly usurpation and oppression, and at the anticipation of a crisis the result of which no one could determine.

MR. REED TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.

Philadelphia, September 25th, 1774.

My LORD,—

Allow me to express the high sense I have of the honour your lordship has done me by your favour of the 11th of July. I sincerely wish it was in my power to render you more essential service than the little circle of my influence or ability allows me to hope; but your condescension in endeavouring to remove the difficulties which lay upon my mind respecting the intentions of administration and Parliament, deserves my particular acknowledgments. I never doubted, my lord, the sincerity of your friendship to this unhappy country, but I consider it as the capital misfortune both of this country and Great Britain, that the advices of either ignorant or interested men have been the groundwork of many of the measures of the last ten years. Permit me to say, my lord, that the utmost caution is necessary when the adviser of any measure has views of office or gain, though it may not depend immediately on the step to be taken. We have often seen accounts published, and from persons high in office in this country, that have been false within the knowledge of every reputable freeholder in it. Such men, my lord, have wickedly practised upon the unsuspecting integrity of our best friends in Britain, infused jealousies of independence, and what not, which the true friends of government in this country never perceived the

least foundation for. It would be equally fair to judge of his majesty from the publications of Junius, as of this country from such representations, or from the hasty and violent resolves of inconsiderable town meetings. No king ever had more loyal subjects; or any country more affectionate colonists than the Americans *were*. I, who am but a young man, well remember when the former was always mentioned with a respect approaching to adoration, and to be an *Englishman* was alone a sufficient recommendation for any office of friendship and civility. But I confess with the greatest concern, that these happy days seem passing swiftly away, and unless some plan of accommodation can be speedily formed, the affection of the colonists will be irrecoverably lost.

Your lordship is pleased to say "that government has no intention to enslave the people of America, but to allow them all the freedom consistent with their connexion with the parent state." If we are to be thus free, should it not have been distinguished in what instances our freedom is inconsistent with our connexion, that as reasonable beings, we might be convinced of the necessity and propriety of being less free than our brethren landholders in Britain! In my poor judgment, the declaratory law, and the acts passed respecting Boston, which are streams from the same fountain, degrade us from the scale of freedom; the former indeed, does not agree with your lordship's ideas of American liberty, which you think should be only partially restrained. Whereas this law is a general restraint enacted by a power wholly independent of us, and binding us in all cases whatsoever. A gentle tyranny is no more compatible with the rights of an English subject, than a violent one, and if the colonies were willing to submit to such a rule, I do not see what security can be given for its continuance; as history strongly testifies that free states can be as despotic and oppressive over their colonies as the most arbitrary ones. Your lordship observes, that it is not material whether the British Legislature have a right to lay the duty, it is sufficient they have done it, to make resistance criminal, and punishment proper. ~~Surely, my lord,~~ power ought not to usurp the place of right. If America is never to resist, let the measures of Parliament be ever so confessedly wrong and unjust, it implies the most abject and absolute submission, and is hardly consistent with the idea of our being as free as our situation with Great Britain will admit; for I do not suppose your lordship means that our situation will exclude us from all the blessings of liberty. There cannot be a more divine right of doing wrong in Parliament, than in the King; and all the principles of the Revolution show that there are certain cases wherein resistance is justifiable as to him. I confess I think there is a clear distinction between supreme and absolute (power), even as to Great Britain, much more as to the Colonies; and as there seems to be a necessity for a supremacy in Parliament independent of actual representation, I submit it to your lordship's judgment, whether this supremacy might not be accurately defined, and its operation limited by some certain bounds so as to leave no room for future disputes. But I ought to beg your lordship's pardon for

thus trespassing on your patience with sentiments which I doubt not you have often considered, and proceed to matters of fact, proper for your lordship's knowledge.

The Congress met here on the 1st of September, consisting of delegates from all the colonies, from New Hampshire to South Carolina inclusive, in all about fifty-two. They opened the meeting with great solemnity, and chose the Speaker of Virginia their Chairman, or President. They concluded their deliberations should be secret, which rule they observed until the publication of the enclosed papers. We only know that as yet great unanimity of sentiment prevails, and that a very large committee is engaged in stating the rights of an American subject. There are among them many persons of excellent sense and great abilities. The Boston delegates, who are critically situated, act with uncommon prudence and discretion; they speak with much respect of your lordship, and impute the loss of your protection to the misrepresentations of their enemies. But what shall I say to your lordship of the appearances in this country? What seemed a little time since to be a spark which might with prudence have been extinguished, is now a flame which threatens ruin to both the parent and the child. The spirit of the people gradually rose when it might have been expected to decline, till the Quebec Bill added fuel to the fire. Then all those deliberate measures of petitioning previous to opposition, were laid aside as inadequate to the apprehended mischief and danger, and now the people are generally ripe for any plan the Congress advise, should it be war itself. I can hardly think that I am in the same place, and among the same people, so great is the alteration of sentiment. As far as I can judge, should the merchants hesitate to comply with any suspension of trade the Congress direct, the people of the country will compel them, and I know no power capable to protect them. A few days ago we were alarmed with a report that General Gage had cannonaded the town of Boston. So general a resentment, amounting even to fury, appeared every where, that I firmly believe, if it had not been contradicted, thousands would have gone at their own expense, to have joined in the revenge. It was difficult to make them doubt the intelligence, or delay setting out. Those who served in the last war in the Provincial troops, others discharged from the regulars, and many who have seen service in Germany, and migrated to this country, with such others as would have joined them, would have formed from the best accounts a considerable body. I believe, had the news proved true, an army of forty thousand men, well provided with every thing except cannon, would before this have been on its march to Boston. From these appearances, and the decided language of all ranks of people, I am convinced, my lord, that if blood be once spilled, we shall be involved in all the horrors of a civil war. Unacquainted either from history or experience with the calamities incident to such a state, with minds full of resentment at the severity of the Mother Country, and stung with the contempt with which their petitions have always been received, the Americans are determined to risk all the consequences.

The resolve of the Congress on the resolutions of the county of Suffolk, in which there was not only unanimity of provinces, but of individual members, is to me truly astonishing, and manifests a spirit leading to desperation in my opinion worthy your lordship's serious attention, as well as every other friend of mankind.* Unless some healing measures are speedily adopted, the Colonies will be wholly lost to England, or be preserved to her in such a manner as to be worse than useless for years to come. I am fully satisfied, my lord, and so I think must every man whose views are not limited to the narrow bounds of a single province, that America never can be governed by force; so daring a spirit as animates her, will require a greater power than Great Britain can spare, and it will be one continued conflict, till depopulation and destruction follow your victories, or the Colonies establish themselves in some sort of independence.

The idea of bringing down the Canadians and savages upon the English Colonies, is so inconsistent not only with mercy, but justice and humanity of the Mother Country, that I cannot allow myself to think that your lordship would promote the Quebec Bill, or give it your suffrage, with such intentions. Should it unhappily be applied this way, it will wound the feelings of every man in this country so sensibly, that I doubt whether any future accommodations or length of time would obliterate it. The friends of Government here, treat it as a calumny on administration, not supposing so odious and dreadful a measure can possibly be framed by an English ministry under a humane and virtuous prince. There are many, my lord, in every province, of the most respectable character, who ardently wish a reconciliation, and will stand forward to promote it whenever an opportunity offers, on grounds, which I trust in your private judgment will not seem unreasonable. These, my lord, will prove the true patriots of this country, and will be the most powerful agents of the Mother Country. This assistance will, however, be totally lost, should the measure, above mentioned, be adopted. Indeed, my lord, I do not see how any American of conscience or honour could serve an administration or cause supported by means so cruel and unnatural.

As the Congress has been sitting so long, I doubt not your lordship would wish to know what plan they will probably recommend to the Colonies. I can only judge by what falls in private conversation, from which I gather that they will propose, 1st. An immediate non-importation agreement. 2d. Non-exportation to Great Britain after a future day, not very remote. 3d. Should these fail, non-exportation to Ireland and the West Indies. Added to these, they will probably recommend a non-consumption agreement, in case the importers of British manufactures hesitate to comply. Should this bloodless war fail in its operation, the northern Colonies will try the last resort, while the middle and southern will secretly, if not openly assist

* Galloway, in his Historical Reflections, (published at London, in 1780,) gives a very different account of this action of Congress. He is, however, little to be trusted.

them. I cannot dissemble with your lordship that it appears to me we are on the verge of a civil war not to be equalled in history for its importance and fatal consequences. If the Americans had less ground for apprehension and complaint, it would be in vain to reason with men, breathing bold defiance and declaring they are resolved not to survive what they esteem the liberties of their country. But you, my lord, I hope will judge with less passion, and act with more moderation, as you are more remote from so interesting a scene. The quantity of English goods imported this year is very great. Too many of your merchants, I fear, will have reason to repent their credulity in trusting their property in so precarious an adventure. Should the sword once be drawn, and America persist in resistance, out of the five millions supposed to be due to Great Britain, I doubt whether two would be paid. As the eyes of all America are upon this city, and at this time the transactions of the Congress are indeed very important to the whole British Empire, I shall endeavour to give your lordship early and authentic intelligence worthy your notice. Should any freedom of sentiment or expression occur, I must pray your lordship to excuse it, as an excess of zeal and anxiety for the country which gave me being. I cannot see the ruin which hangs over it without extreme concern; and if I know my own heart, its intentions are honestly and truly to state public affairs to your lordship, with firm confidence that your benevolence and public virtue will be exerted to avert it, the most dreadful of all calamities, a civil war.

I am, &c.*

MR. REED TO MR. DE BERDT.

Philadelphia, September 26th, 1774.

You ask me whether you may expect more business from this quarter. I cannot but say I am heartily rejoiced that you have had no more. The pre-

* On the 5th of September, 1774, Governor Penn wrote to Lord Dartmouth, assuring him that while there was entire unanimity of sentiment among the Colonies, there was great, and he believed, irreconcilable diversity of opinion as to modes of redress. And on the 7th September, Lord Dartmouth thus anticipated the meeting of the Congress: "I have only to observe that it has given the king great concern to find that his subjects in the different Colonies of North America have been induced, upon the grounds stated in the different resolutions, to nominate deputies to meet in General Congress at Philadelphia. If the object of the Congress be humbly to represent to the king any grievances they may have to complain of, or any propositions they have to make on the present state of America, such representation would certainly have come from each colony, with greater weight in its separate capacity, than in a channel, the propriety and legality of which there may be much doubt. I fear, however, that the measure is gone too far to encourage any hope that it has been retracted, and I can only express my wishes that the result of their proceedings may be such as not to cut off all hope of that union which is so essential to the happiness of both."

sent appearances bode ruin to all the American merchants, and one half the debts to Great Britain will never be paid unless there should be an immediate repeal of all the obnoxious laws, which from the temper both of the Minister and people of Great Britain, I fear there is little reason to hope. It will in a little time be patriotism to distress the Mother Country in every way; the withholding the payment of the debts due to her citizens, will not be overlooked, and in my opinion, the first drop of blood spilt in America, will occasion a total suspension of all commerce and connexion. We are indeed on the melancholy verge of civil war. United as one man, and breathing a spirit of the most animating kind, the Colonies are resolved to risk the consequences of opposition to the late edicts of Parliament. All ranks of people, from the highest to the lowest, speak the same language, and I believe will act the same part. I know of no power in this country that can protect an opposer of the public voice and conduct. A spirit and resolution is manifested which would not have disgraced the Romans in their best days. I hope they will mingle with them prudence and temperance so as to avoid extremities as long as possible. No man dares open his mouth against non-importation. Now the Congress have recommended it, it will not stop here; —non-exportation to England, Ireland, and the West Indies, and, if necessary, non-consumption of English fabrics, will be the bloodless and defensive war of the Colonies so long as hostilities are forbore by administration; but when they commence, (if unhappily they should,) terrible consequences are to be apprehended. God only knows what will be the event of all these things. If Parliament will repeal the tea duty, and put Boston in its former station, all will be well, and the tea will be paid for. Nothing else will save this country and Britain too. My head and heart are both full.

CHAPTER IV.

1774—1775.

Letter to Lord Dartmouth, October, 1774—Acts of the Congress—Mr. Quincy's visit to Great Britain—Letter to Mr. Quincy, 25th Oct. and 6th November, 1774, on American Affairs—The Second Congress—Committee of Safety organized—Letter to Charles Pettit, 14th and 31st January, 1775—Meeting of the Assembly—Provincial Convention—Mr. Reed President—Last letter to Lord Dartmouth, 10th February, 1775—Letters of friends—Battle of Lexington.

TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.*

MY LORD,—

I did myself the honour of writing a very long letter to your lordship about three weeks ago with as perfect an account as could then be obtained of the intentions of the General Congress, and of the state of America as far as my observation extended. The Deputies having now nearly finished their business, I transmit to your lordship that part of their proceedings which has yet transpired. Besides this, they have agreed upon an address to the King, which your lordship will see before it can be published here. About two weeks ago they forwarded a letter of expostulation to General Gage, couched in very warm and animated terms, on his alleged intention to fortify the town of Boston;—this also I make no doubt your lordship will receive an account of from Boston. They have also recommended another Congress to be held here on the 10th of May. The temper and spirit of the people continue as when I wrote last. The resolutions of Congress will be undoubtedly carried into faithful execution here, and I believe throughout all America.† We have this day received an account of a transaction at Annapolis in Maryland, which shows to what an alarming height

* This letter without a date appears to have been written about the 15th October, 1774.

† 15th November. *General Gage to Lord Dartmouth*: “The proceedings of the Continental Congress astonish and terrify all considerate men; but though I am confident that many of their resolutions neither can nor will be observed, I fear they will be generally received, as there does not appear to be resolution and strength enough among the more sensible and moderate people in any of the provinces openly to reject them.”

the spirit of the people has arisen in this part of America. As it may not reach your lordship by an earlier conveyance, I have enclosed the account as transcribed from the narrative sent to this city of the transaction. If the measures and intentions of administration depend upon any expected disunion of the Colonies, your lordship may consider it as an undoubted fact that they have had very little more division in the Congress than what arises on the mode of opposition. They were unanimous in denying the authority of Parliament in laying internal and external taxes, or to alter the internal government of the Colonies. They have parted with great affection and friendship, and carry to their several provinces the fullest resolutions to see the measures they have planned duly executed. Possessed of these facts and proceedings, your lordship may be able to form some judgment what consequences will follow a pertinacious adherence to the principles and measures adopted on each side the Atlantic. The Americans are certainly determined never to submit to the claims of Parliament unless compelled by irresistible force, and this submission will never continue longer than the force which produces it. However visionary it may appear at first view to give up the commerce of the whole country, and in the last resort, to try their strength in arms with so potent a nation as Great Britain, your lordship may depend on it they will attempt both. Preparations are making by military associations in every part of the country, for the last appeal; and every other step taken which indicate the most determined resolution to yield to nothing but necessity. The universal claim is, to be restored to the state we were in 1763, though a line drawn at that period includes some of those laws to whose principles and binding authority we are now opposed. It may be, that after some time of anxiety, apprehension, and self-denial, a line more acceptable to the Mother Country may be thought of. But in the mean time, there may be great danger of a total alienation of the affections of the colonists; of the loss of great part of the large debt due to the English merchants; of the diminution and at last total loss of the tobacco trade. The Congress has inculcated in the strongest terms on the delegates from Boston, to restrain the people of that province from any hostilities upon General Gage, and to wait patiently the effect their measures may produce; so that unless the General should act offensively, we may hope there will be no blood spilled, at least for some time.*

I am, &c.

* On 24th December, 1774, Lord Chatham writes to Mr. Sayre, then one of the sheriffs of London:—"Soon after I had the pleasure of seeing you, I received the extracts from the votes and proceedings of the American Congress, printed and published by order at Philadelphia, which had been withheld from me as the letters to others had been. I have not words to express my satisfaction that the Congress has conducted this most arduous and delicate business with such manly wisdom and calm resolution as do the highest honour to their deliberations. Very few are the things contained in their resolves that I could wish had been otherwise. Upon the whole, I think it must be evident to every unprejudiced man in England who feels for the rights of mankind, that America, under all her oppressions

Throughout all the letters to the Minister, which from this time became less frequent, there is a subdued tone of expression little consonant with the temper of the writer's mind. A different strain of feeling pervaded Mr. Reed's intercourse with others. His letters to his friends were the unrestrained expression of his zeal and patriotic fervour, made in the security that confidence would not be abused. To the Minister he wrote under the restraint which the peculiarity of their relation produced, and with a degree of reserve as to his own participation in public affairs which was requisite to give his communications the effect that he desired. This caution was urged upon him in every letter from Mr. De Berdt, who felt an anxious interest in the success of measures of conciliation, and to whose inspection all the letters were submitted. His fear was, and it does not appear unreasonable, that if the Minister regarded his correspondent as a violent partisan, though he could not view him otherwise than as a decided advocate of colonial privilege, he would disregard his opinions as emanating from the sources which were so obnoxious to ministerial displeasure.

In 1774, Josiah Quincy, jr., went on a secret mission to London, and remained there until the following year. To him, as a correspondent in whom confidence could be reposed, and on whose sympathy he could depend, Mr. Reed expressed himself in his natural manner.*

and provocations, holds forth to us the most fair and just opening for restoring harmony and affectionate intercourse as heretofore. I trust that the minds of men are more than beginning to change on this great subject, so little understood; and that it will be found impossible for freemen in England to wish to see three millions of Englishmen slaves in America." *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 368.

On 31st October, Governor Penn wrote to Lord Dartmouth: "I learn the Congress have framed a petition to the King, but not having had the least connexion or intercourse with any of the members of the Congress, I am entirely unacquainted with its contents, or with any other part of their transactions than they have thought fit to make public."

* Mr. Quincy's letters in reply will be found in the delightful memoir published some years ago by his son, President Quincy.

MR. REED TO MR. QUINCY.

Philadelphia, October 25th, 1774.

DEAR SIR,—

I hope this will find you safely arrived in Great Britain, a country wherein I have spent many happy hours, before she began to play the tyrant over America. The cloud which hung over the Colonies at the time of your departure, begins to disperse. Instead of divided counsels and feeble measures, which at one time there was too much reason to apprehend, all now is union and firmness; and I trust we shall exhibit such a proof of public virtue and enlightened zeal, in the most glorious of all causes, as will hand down the present age with the most illustrious characters of antiquity. I have with great difficulty procured you the proceedings of the General Congress, which is now rising; but your delegates, from whom I received it, beg you will not make a public use of it, as the copy is incorrect. Your friend, Mr. John Adams, has written something to this effect on the first page. As the proceedings of this great assembly are so interesting and important, I could not think of this vessel going without carrying them to you. Another ship will sail in a few days, by which I will send you what remains, being the list of grievances and claim of rights. The Congress would not adjourn, but recommended another to be held on the 10th of May, at this place. They part with each other on terms of the utmost friendship: it will have the most happy effect in cementing the union of the Colonies, not only by the ties of public interest, but of private friendship.

This ship will carry you the news of the destruction of both ship and cargo at Annapolis. The owners of both, to avoid a more dreadful punishment for their presumption and folly, offered to set fire with their own hands, which they did.* These proofs of the spirit of the people will, I trust, be of some service to Boston. England must see that opposition to parliamentary tyranny is not local or partial.—I congratulate you, my dear sir, upon the rising glory of America. Our operations have been almost too slow for the accumulated sufferings of Boston. Should this bloodless war fail of its effect, a great majority of the Colonies will make the last appeal, before they resign their liberties into the hands of any ministerial tyrant.

TO MR. QUINCY.

Philadelphia, November 6th, 1774.

DEAR SIR,—

I wrote to you the latter end of last month, expecting it would be the first advice you would receive of the proceedings of the American Congress; but by a delay of the vessel, and her being obliged to put into New York in distress, it is probable that my well-intended efforts will fail. The Congress broke up soon after, and your Boston brethren returned in high spirits at the

* For an account of this affair, see *American Archives*, vol. i. pp. 885—1061.

happy and harmonious issue of this important business. Since that time there has been a stagnation of public intelligence and advices.

On Saturday next, agreeably to the directions of the Congress, a great committee is to be chosen in this city, to carry the association of the Congress into execution. The Quakers, who you know form a considerable part of the population of this city, act their usual part. They have directed their members not to serve on the committee, and mean to continue the same indecisive, neutral conduct, until they see how the scale is likely to preponderate; then, I doubt not, they will contribute to the relief of Boston, and appear forward in the cause. But American liberty, in the mean time, must take her chance for them. However, there is no danger of the enemy being let in through this city;—there is a band of staunch, chosen sons of liberty, among some of our best families, who are backed by the body of the people in such a manner that no discontented spirit dares oppose the measures necessary for the public safety. I am more afraid of New York. There has been a strange delinquency and backwardness during the whole summer. If you have any correspondence there, I wish you would endeavour to animate them. While they are attending to the little paltry disputes which their own parties have produced, the great cause is suffering in their hands," &c.

It was in answer to this letter that Mr. Quincy made the emphatic declaration:—

"I look to my countrymen with the feelings of one who verily believes they must yet seal their faith and constancy with their blood. This is a distressing witness indeed. But hath not this ever been the lot of humanity? Hath not blood and treasure in all ages been the price of civil liberty? Can Americans hope a reversal of the laws of our nature, and that the best of blessings will be obtained and secured without the sharpest trials? Adieu! my friend! my heart is with yon, and whenever my countrymen command, my person shall be also."*

This glorious participation in the struggle was denied him, for within a few months after this letter was written, Mr. Quincy died on his voyage to America, the day before the vessel in which he was a passenger, made the land.

The meeting of the General Congress at Philadelphia produced the most happy results on the minds of the citizens of the capital, and of the leading men throughout the province. The personal character of the delegates was such as to inspire

* *Quincy's Memoirs*, p. 280.

confidence. The mystery with which their deliberations were conducted ; the unanimity with which it was believed all their resolutions had passed, although in fact, as in the instance of Mr. Galloway's proposition, which was negatived by a majority of but one colony, there had been great difference of opinion ; the manifest cordiality with which the intercourse between the members was conducted ; and the firm, yet temperate tone of the documents which they published, the most decided of which was the vote of approbation of the Suffolk County resolutions ; all tended to compose the political agitation, and to qualify the bitterness of feeling which had begun to manifest itself. It was indeed singular, considering the elements, that the views of all parties should have been so happily met. The zealous patriots, who looked directly to the last resort, felt that while temporising measures were approved by the Congress, in which body there were many as zealous as themselves, they could have no reason to complain. Those who deemed temperance of action and language to be the best policy, were satisfied with the moderation of the manifestoes of the Congress, and with the conviction, that those whom they regarded as their proper representatives had great influence in that body. Even the timid and disaffected had less reason to complain than they anticipated. They too had their representatives, who were distinguished for talents and influence, and they felt relieved at the preference of the counsels of the moderate party with whom they had some sympathy, to those of the ultras, with whom they had none. All felt more or less pleased with the result of the great experiment, and all at least seemed anxious to carry into effect the non-importation agreement. In the mode of adopting this measure, the Congress had been very happy. They did not recommend non-importation merely by resolution, but by a solemn article of association, signed by the members, in which they bound themselves and their constituents, "by the sacred ties of virtue, honour, and love of country," to the performance of the duties it prescribed. On their constituents an obligation recorded and proclaimed with such solemnity was necessarily of binding force.

MR. REED TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.

Philadelphia Dec. 10, 1774.

My Lord,—

After forwarding to your lordship as early as possible the proceedings of the General Congress, nothing occurred of a public nature worthy your notice, till within these few weeks past. A large committee in that time has been chosen by this city in the same manner as the members of Assembly are chosen, in order to carry into execution the association and measures directed by that body. Accordingly, since the 1st inst., every cargo arriving from Great Britain and Ireland, or the British plantations, has been delivered into the hands of this committee, to be sold or stored as the importer should direct, and so great is the unanimity and prevailing spirit of the inhabitants, that no individuals have thought proper to refuse or decline a compliance with the self-denying ordinance of the General Congress. But what is of great importance in this province, the Assembly has this day adopted all the measures of the Congress, as your lordship may see by the enclosed minute of their proceedings. The body of Quakers in the province, which is numerous and weighty, act what they call a passive part, but they have hitherto complied in every respect with the measures of the Congress, and there is no doubt, now they have received something more than a legal sanction from the Assembly, this province will strictly adhere to them. The very large importations of goods the last year with the quantities on hand, will enable us to bear a non-importation agreement for a considerable time, but still it is the earnest wish and anxious desire of numbers of the most wise and valuable men, that some method may be fallen upon to restore the former harmony and good humour which subsisted between Great Britain and her Colonies.

I am, my Lord, &c.

MR. REED TO MR. DE BERDT.

Philadelphia, December 24, '74.

As to public affairs, I must refer you to the enclosed, except some few remarks of a private nature. I fear there will soon be so much reason for censure on both sides that a prudent person will find it difficult to act. A spirit of domination in the Mother Country has produced a spirit of libertinism rather than of liberty here, and in my opinion both sides will have something to concede before a settlement is made. On your side too little allowance is given for the repeated encroachments that have been made on our liberty and property, and insult has been added to injury by a contempt of all applications for redress, unless accompanied with some measures which

forced an attention by making you feel, as in the case of the Stamp Act. On our side too keen a resentment has taken place, which has given birth to doctrines and measures in which perhaps passion has mingled in our councils and disturbed the work of reason and judgment. I should be sorry Lord Dartmouth should resign, for tho' he is by no means popular in America, yet I take him to be a friend to healing measures, and that he would be unwilling to dip his hands in blood.

As to Wilkes and Sayre, the Bill of Rights, &c., I think it is rather to be lamented that a people so well disposed in favour of general liberty as those of London and Middlesex, should have fallen into such hands. What a noble opposition to the present system of arbitrary power and corruption might have been formed by men of real virtue and wisdom; with such tools and such a support an able workman would have cut out work for the ablest minister in the world, but I fear the whole fund will be exhausted, and city patriotism become a standing jest throughout the kingdom. Its manifest perversion to the purposes of private interest has stripped it of the greatest part of its dignity and consequence. I am glad to find you think my information has been useful and agreeable to Lord Dartmouth; if it does not tell him what he wishes yet it tells him what he ought to know, and I propose to continue it, though, as you observe, a due degree of caution is necessary.

MR. REED TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.

December 24th, 1774.

MY LORD,—

Your favourable acceptance of my letters, which have so little to recommend them but the honest and grateful intentions with which they are written, induce me to embrace every opportunity of acquainting your lordship with such public transactions here as may influence your judgment and conduct in the important affairs of America. My last enclosed to your lordship the vote of approbation of the Assembly of this province of the proceedings of the late Congress, which has been of great importance in a colony seldom deviating from the established forms of government, as it is expressive of the approbation of a large number of Quakers in the House, a body of people who have acted a passive part in all the disputes between the Mother Country and the Colonies. Since that time they have also appointed delegates to the next Congress to be held in May. The Governor has applied to them to repair the barracks built here for the soldiery; they have for the first time absolutely refused to make any such provision. A question was moved in the House to provide a quantity of fire-arms and ammunition, but this was overruled, rather, I believe, from the religious than political principles of a number of the members. Your lordship will

doubtless be informed from Maryland that a provincial convention assessed the several counties in £10,000, for the purpose of procuring arms, ammunition, &c.; they have also formed themselves into companies and regiments, and are daily practising the use of arms. Considerable orders for cloth have been sent to this town for regimentals, and in short every preparation made, which the last extremity would require. The same spirit we are informed reigns in Virginia. Advices have also come to this town informing us that Georgia had acceded to the measures of the last Congress and chose delegates to attend the next, which is to be held the 10th May. Upon the whole, it appears to me highly that every Assembly whose colony have had any share in the proceedings of the Congress, will adopt its measures and by that means throw the whole weight of the democratical part of the government in the scale of opposition. The latter end of this month, a provincial convention is to be held here; the ostensible reasons are the uniting in some general plan for encouraging our own manufactures, joining the whole strength of the counties in support of the association of the General Congress, and such other steps as may be necessary to insure a full compliance with it in every part. With respect to military preparations, it is probable something of that kind will be proposed at that meeting; but as to ammunition, from the large importations of gunpowder and saltpetre this fall, the royal proclamation will have little effect in this province. There are several powder-mills in this province which have a large stock of materials and are working with great assiduity. What will be the event of these unhappy struggles is yet in the womb of Providence. I fear next summer will be distinguished as one of the most important and interesting periods in British history. That your lordship may be directed to the wisest, and best, and most successful measures to restore peace and harmony is the sincere wish and prayer of

Your lordship's, &c., &c.

In the Assembly, whose session began early in December, 1774, the difficult task of conciliation was executed with great skill by Dickinson and Mifflin; and by their exertions, the House, on the 10th of that month, were induced to pass a resolution approving of the conduct of Congress.* This Colonial Legislature having been distinguished for its caution and moderation, so decided a vote was regarded as a most favourable omen, and indicative of a change of feeling, particularly

* Governor Penn seems to have anticipated a different result, for in a letter to the Ministry, on the 31st December, he says, "Since my last, the Assembly of this province have met, agreeable to adjournment, and have, to my great surprise, unanimously approved the transactions of the late Congress, and appointed deputies to attend another," &c.

among the Friends. The next measure suggested, and adopted, was the election of delegates to the Congress of 1775, and by the exertions of his personal and political friends, Mr. Dickinson was again chosen.

MR. REED TO MR. PETTIT.

January 14th, 1775.

As you have given me a half a sheet upon politics, I cannot but make you some return, and especially correct your misinformation of matters here. Mr. Galloway's conduct is so various, that it is impossible, I believe, to judge what his sentiments and intentions are. I fear among all their varieties he will never stumble upon those of an honest man or a gentleman. He once, in the House of Assembly, I am told, obliquely reflected upon the measures of the Congress, but his dissenting at the time, protest, &c., he concealed so carefully, that no member of Congress knew of it besides himself. Perhaps it was like the speech he wrote once, three weeks after the debate. He has not refused to serve as a delegate, for he is appointed, and has it under consideration till the session in February. Mr. Dickinson may fear for his property, but he keeps his fears to himself. When he pressed Mr. Galloway to go as a delegate, it was far from any opinion of his talents or sentiments. The only argument he made use of was, that his declining would have a bad effect on the public cause. As to any disagreements between Dickinson and Thomson in public affairs, there is not the least foundation for it. No such debate ever happened as you mention. There is too much danger of one being implicitly directed by the other. Mr. Dickinson has expressed no such compunction about the measures of Congress, or ever complained of the loss of sleep, &c.; it must be all mere invention. I have my intelligence from the fountain-head. I was present at Bucks—there were ninety persons voted for committee. The day was one of the most stormy I ever saw. All the justices, except one, approved and assisted in the measure. Those who voted were all freeholders, and some of the best property in the county. Bucks, you know, is a Quaker county, and I suppose you know, the Quakers act what they call a passive part. Every thing goes on smoothly yet, and there is no doubt it will continue, if some rash people in the committee do not overgovern, which there is some danger of. Nothing but some imprudent measure of that kind will bring about any change here.

With a view to compel the Assembly to persevere in this course, and to infuse new energy into that body, a Provincial Convention was devised and recommended by the General Committee, the ostensible object being the encouragement of domestic industry, while it really was meant

to exercise a supervision of the conduct of the Legislature. This scheme, though earnestly opposed by many of the leading Whig politicians, as tending to interfere with the plans which were in progress to continue the Assembly in harmonious co-operation with those of the other colonies, was consummated by the election of members in all the counties, and by their meeting at Philadelphia, on the 23d January, 1775. As soon as they were organized, the chairman of the City Committee stated the objects for which they had been called, and recommended the choice of officers, and the immediate adoption of resolutions expressive of the views of the Convention. Mr. Reed was elected President. This post, however, he was by no means anxious to assume, having agreed with many of his political friends in disapproving of the Convention. It was, however, necessary, that there should be no apparent diversity of sentiment, and under the conviction of this necessity, he consented to act. The Convention sat from day to day, until the 28th, when it was dissolved.

MR. REED TO MR. PETTIT.

January 31st, 1775.

Public affairs go on as well as can be expected. If you judge of Philadelphia from Rivington's paper, you will be much mistaken. There is a little, dirty, despicable party endeavouring to sow dissension, and attempting to set up a new press, but it goes on heavily. Enoch Story is the principal director, who knows as much about printing and composition as your old horse.

We have accounts from England, as late as the 25th November. The tide is certainly turning towards America; all the accounts, both public and private, agree that the Ministry are disposed to relax in the articles of the Boston Port Bill, and for the administration of justice; upon the whole we have more reason to hope than to fear. I am glad to find your Council and Assembly (New Jersey) behave so well, for though I think the Congress proceeded on too high a scale, I know the designs of the Ministry, and the temper of the people of England so well, that I am confident nothing but a union in any scheme would relieve us from the oppressions which were meditating, and which the present measures were only designed to introduce. While they claim all, I can, with a safe conscience, deny all. Our mutual

interests and necessities point out some middle line which I should be for adopting. We have left room enough to recede, and I doubt not shall be ready to do it whenever Great Britain shows that she is willing to recede on her part from those extravagant claims which annihilate all security for life, liberty, and property. I had a long letter of two sheets from Lord Dartmouth, with his political creed respecting America, bad enough, God knows! But if he thinks thus, what may we expect from Hillsborough, and such scoundrels. I have become a great favourite with his lordship, you must know,—indeed my intelligence has been, I believe, as honest as any he had, perhaps more so, as I have certainly had opportunities of knowing what few of his correspondents could know, and in point of time from my opportunities I must have been beforehand with them.

MR. REED TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH.

Philadelphia, February 10, 1775.

My LORD,—

As I have never disguised my sentiments on the unhappy dispute between the Mother Country and the Colonies, nor concealed my acting agreeably to those sentiments, I have been led to doubt whether your lordship may not deem the honour you do me, inconsistent with your public character, and bound to enforce those measures which the dignity of Great Britain may be thought to require, but of which a very different opinion will be formed in this country. If so, a word to Mr. De Berdt will be sufficient, and I shall forbear to trouble your lordship further, though I shall ever retain sentiments of the most sincere and respectful devotion and gratitude for your condescension to myself, and the regard your lordship has often expressed for this unhappy country. If the confidence my fellow-citizens repose in me, and which has led to more activity than I wished or intended, have not rendered me unworthy of your lordship's further notice, I shall cheerfully continue my communications, and do with sincerity declare that my present or any future influence shall be faithfully exerted not to widen the present breach, but to dispose the minds of those around me, to such measures as may be consistent with the dignity and interest of the Mother Country, and the safety of this. I hope and believe I have already been instrumental in guarding this city and province from measures which had an irritating tendency, and while I am thus employed, I trust I am acting the part of a good subject and citizen; though I cannot acquiesce in the claims of Parliament to bind in all cases, but on the other hand, esteem it my indispensable duty to oppose those which in my poor judgment degrade me from the rank of a free subject.

My last informed your lordship of a proposed Provincial Convention to be held here, which has since met. Their deliberations were chiefly directed

to the encouragement of manufactures, and such cultivation of the ground, during the ensuing season, as would best provide for the exigencies which the non-importation agreements might occasion. It was intended to take some steps towards arming and disciplining the province, a measure which I opposed both publicly and privately. But so general a disinclination appeared to it, that it was laid aside without discussion. I am happy in observing and communicating to your Lordship, that notwithstanding all that has passed, there remains much of that old affection to our parent state, which distinguished our happier days, that we regard a contest with her as the greatest possible evil next to the loss of our rights and privileges, and that there is a general disposition in a great majority of this province, to reconciliation upon any terms consistent with those essential rights which ought to distinguish an English colonist from those of an arbitrary state. Should this disposition be improved by administration,—and we should look forward rather than backward,—I cannot doubt that an accommodation compatible with the interest and honour of Great Britain, might yet take place, and this Confederacy, which a common danger and common interest have created, would immediately dissolve.

Your lordship perhaps will say, from the proceedings of the late Congress, that you see no disposition of this kind. I must allow the force of the remark. But permit me to suggest that this was the first general attempt to delineate the rights of the American subject; that many of the delegates came, under the impression of the hand of power laid heavily upon them, and that all partook more or less of a sort of resentment and passion, which the Boston acts and their consequences produced. That under all these incitements, passion may have unintentionally mingled with their counsels, which a cooler hour and more mature deliberation will rectify. If I am not mistaken, your lordship will soon see some proofs of this disposition, unless some new severity should raise the subsiding spirit, and cement the union by some common misfortune, or severe punishment of any particular colony excite a common apprehension.*

The King's speech was received with a kind of sullenness which I cannot

* On the 18th January, General Gage had written, "The eyes of all are turned upon Great Britain; and it is the opinion of most people, that if a respectable force is seen in the field, the most obnoxious of the leaders seized, and a pardon proclaimed for all others, government will come off victorious, and with less opposition than was expected a few months ago." The minister, however, preferred coercion on a small scale, and on the 27th January, Lord Dartmouth wrote, "The violences committed by those who have taken up arms (?) in Massachusetts, have appeared to me as the acts of a rude rabble, without plan, without concert, without conduct, and therefore I think that a small force now, if put to the test, would be able to conquer them with greater probability of success than might be expected from a larger army, if the people should be suffered to form themselves upon a more regular plan, to acquire a confidence from discipline, and to prepare themselves, without which every thing must be put to the issue of a single action."

describe, but is strongly expressive of a resolution and spirit not to submit without a struggle in case no conciliatory measures are adopted by Great Britain. There is scarcely a man in this country, my lord, in or out of office, not of immediate appointment from England, who will not oppose taxation by the British Parliament. We are, indeed, much misinformed, if it is not your lordship's opinion, as well as many others, that, if you have the right, it is not expedient to exercise it. Suppose this was declared by act of Parliament, the Boston acts repealed, and satisfaction for the tea made; with much deference, I submit, such procedure would create such a confidence, and excite such gratitude, as would dispose the Colonies to concur in any proposition for settling a constitution for America upon reasonable principles, and raising the so-inuch-desired revenue; if that be thought too hazardous an experiment, I verily believe a submission to all acts of Parliament of general superintendence, and control of trade without reference to revenue, might be relied on. If any encouragement were given to commissioners from the several assemblies, to attend a conference in Great Britain, and the Boston acts suspended in the interim, I incline to think most of the Colonies would now accede to such a measure. I confess I had it much at heart last summer, and got a clause of this nature inserted in the instructions formed in this province. Some alterations in the executive part of government, such as the residence of officers in this country, easing trade in some particulars, and enjoining a courteous and civil demeanour in all officers, instead of that haughty supercilious deportment they too generally assume, would contribute to the harmony of both countries, and to the facility of business in your lordship's department.

I am very sensible that the disposition I have mentioned may by some be imputed to timidity, and apprehension of division among ourselves. That there are some in this province, and more in New York, who do not think with the Congress in all things is very true, but on the best inquiry, the majority of a different opinion is too great, and the number of the dissentients too small, to make it a circumstance of material weight in any plan which may be formed. By what I have said, your lordship will see that it is my opinion, if it can be reconciled with the dignity of the Mother Country to express a desire of accommodation, and the present severities against Boston could be suspended, on making satisfaction for the damage done the tea, the Americans may think it their interest to recede in some degree from the line of jurisdiction drawn in Congress. But this country will be deluged with blood, before it will submit to any other taxation than by their own Legislature.*

* Contemporaneously with this letter were numerous despatches from the Governors, in the tone of which a great change is perceptible. They no longer affected to despise the colonial movement, but spoke of it as having become most alarming. But the Ministry seemed to be infatuated.

November 2, 1774, General Gage writes: "The province is without courts of

This letter was enclosed in a confidential one to his brother-in-law in London.

MR. REED TO MR. DE BERDT.

13th February, 1775.

We entertain such suspicions of your post-office, that it is a great restraint on that freedom of communication which alone makes an intimate correspondence desirable. This letter will be delivered to you by an old servant of Mr. Wilcox's, and therefore I am more at liberty than I otherwise should be. The proceedings of Congress have been pitched on too high a key for some of these middle Provinces; so that notwithstanding the general public approbation, there are many individuals who from murmuring, speak out, and our publications have grown more free than in former disputes. However, there is not a man in this country out of an office of immediate appointment from England who is not against taxation. There are but two modes to be thought of, to prevent apprehended extremities—one is by temporising, repealing the acts lately passed which distressed Boston, and the tea duty, and leave the question of right undiscussed, at the same time protect the dignity of the Mother Country by a payment of the damages sustained on account of the tea, about which in that case there would be no difficulty. The other, to propose to the several Assemblies to send commissioners to England to settle a constitution for America, and as a preliminary, to suspend the operation of the late acts, for while they continue it is a species of *duress*, which excludes the idea of a free conference, or voluntary submission. The colonies to the north and south of Pennsylvania, including New Jersey, are very unanimous. The division in these Provinces* may perhaps, and I believe will, damp the spirit of opposition here so as to prevent any forward decisive measure, but it is not a division on which any Minister can build a public measure. For as there is a union of sentiment as to the principle, and the only difference is as to the mode, all parties are not so far from an agreement as may be imagined.

Indeed I am of opinion that the Mother Country can hardly take any steps to enforce its measures which will not produce a change in many who now find fault with the proceedings of the late Congress. The disadvantage of the former mode would be the continuance of all kind of smuggling, which daily increases,—a want of confidence in each other soon heightened into

justice or legislation. The whole country in a ferment, many parts of it I may say actually in arms, and ready to unite. Letters from other provinces tell us they are violent every where, and that no decency is observed in any place but New York. Great Britain had never more need of wisdom, firmness and unanimity."

* Pennsylvania and Delaware probably.

suspicion, and a want of security necessary for the support and encouragement of trade. These perpetual bickerings produce non-importation agreements, associations, &c., which must be very pernicious to the merchants of both countries. The other mode would have one good effect;—it would convince the people of America that the Mother Country is disposed to allow them some Constitution, and impose no other restraints but those which are necessary for the preservation and interest of the whole. The contempt with which all applications from this country, tending to draw in question the absolute uncontrolled powers of Parliament, has prevented a proposition of this kind being made from hence. If it is thought a degradation of the dignity of Great Britain to make the overture, an American will say, she has imposed it on herself by her former treatment of our petitions.

I have written a letter to Lord Dartmouth, which, as usual, I enclose to you. I esteem it a happy circumstance, that being on the spot you are able to judge of the propriety or impropriety of what I may write, as well as the agreeable and disagreeable, and so suppress and deliver my letters as you think best. You will exercise this discretion particularly as to the enclosed. I was compelled, much against my inclination, to be chairman of our late Provincial Congress, to which I have alluded in the beginning of my letter. This circumstance will lead him to consider me either in the light of a factious, turbulent person, unworthy his further notice, and improper for him to correspond with, or as a person who acts uprightly on mistaken principles, and has some weight and influence with the Province, which in time may be of use to Government when he sees his error, or the present causes of dissatisfaction shall be removed, and whom, upon the whole, Government might wish to be on their side. But my opinion of the system of Colony Administration must be wholly changed, before I can think of supporting any measure of the British Government founded upon it; but in truth the support of any single person of much more consequence than I can pretend to be, will be of little consequence in a country where the people more generally read, discuss, and judge for themselves, than perhaps any other in the world.

The letter of the 10th February was the last letter written to Lord Dartmouth. On the 19th of April following, the battle of Lexington was fought, and from that period all friendly correspondence was at an end.*

* This correspondence was soon after made the pretext of an attack on Mr. Reed by some of his political enemies. The attempt, however, to injure him was as impotent as it was malicious. It having been alluded to by two of his correspondents writing from Philadelphia to the Camp at Cambridge, Mr. Reed, on 20th August, '75, wrote in answer, "(Mrs. Reed) writes me that she consulted you on the malicious report propagated by _____ that I was acting a double part upon this occasion. I should not be desirous of disclosing

my letters to Lord Dartmouth, but I have no reason to be afraid of doing so if necessary. No such letters have yet been published. I only communicated to him transactions earlier than he found them in the newspapers. I gave no opinions but what led to a renunciation of the present system. I avowed my own principles that the right of taxation was incompatible with the ideas of our rights derived under the British Constitution, and cautioned him against trusting to letters and advices from this country of men holding or seeking office. In my first letter I absolutely disclaimed all office or reward for myself. The general sentiments I am sure would be approved; some might find fault with particular expressions. But even this I have dropped, finding Lord Dartmouth did not resign, as I expected. I have not written to him since the beginning of last February, though he has through Mr. De Berdt solicited it strongly. I never received but one letter from him, which was a long expostulation on my principles, and a vindication of his system, to which I made as good a reply as I could. With common candour my friends need have no fear for me. The open and decisive part I have taken in public affairs—your loss of office, and every other circumstance, I think must evidently prove my fidelity to the cause I have espoused, or I must have been an idiot." In the Life of Lord Barrington by his brother the Bishop of Durham is a very curious correspondence between Lord Dartmouth and Lord Barrington on the subject of the American War.

CHAPTER V.

1775.

Revolution of public feeling—Letters to and from Mr. De Berdt—State of feeling in London—News of the Battle of Lexington received in London, and communicated to the Ministry—Siege of Boston—Letter from Dr. Warren to Mr. Reed, 15th May, 1775—The Pennsylvania militia organized—Washington elected Commander-in-chief—Mr. Reed becomes his military secretary—The Camp at Cambridge—Original draughts of Washington's Letters—Letter to General Thomas, 23d July, 1775—Correspondence with General Gage—Mr. Reed's letters to his family—Plans of attack on Boston—Intercepted letters of John Adams—Want of stores and ammunition—Letter of 29th August—Reconciliation with Great Britain—Arrest of Dr. Church—Original memoranda of council of war—Committee of Congress at camp—John Hancock's letter—Mr. Reed returns to Philadelphia, 29th October, 1775.

THE revolution of feeling in the Colonies in the fifteen years preceding the declaration of their political independence, is an interesting subject of speculation. What was the actual loyalty to the parent country when the seeds of dissension were planted in 1763,—how it declined—the phases of public sentiment, varying with the conduct of the successive ministries—the change from affection and a sense of dependence to hostility, which exists in a modified form, to the present hour,—are inquiries which will give ample scope to the future historian of our country.

The process, in the mind of Mr. Reed, as is apparent from his correspondence, was very gradual,—far more so, indeed, than from his ardent temperament we might be led to suppose. Independently of every other consideration, his family connexions were such as to make him sincerely desirous of a reconciliation of Great Britain and her colonies. He laboured assiduously to promote this, and never abandoned the hope whilst it was reasonable to cherish it. The turning-point in his mind

was the beginning of hostilities in New England. The battle of Lexington effected the change which had been long preparing, and from that moment he banished from his mind all anxiety or hope for a compromise. His correspondence with Lord Dartmouth ceased, and the trace of a wish for reconciliation was soon lost.

The effects of the outbreak of hostilities on business in America are thus described :

MR. REED TO SAMUEL SPRAGGS.*

Philadelphia, May 30th, 1775.

"The next week it was proposed, among other causes, to have brought on the affair of the attachment; but during the sitting of the court, an account came of the unhappy affair in New England between General Gage's troops and the provincials, when the court immediately closed, and no farther business was transacted. It is impossible to describe the state of the country—remittances are not to be expected, while matters continue in their present situation: for though there is not, nor I hope ever will be, a formal agreement to stop remittances, yet private necessity and public calamity will operate more strongly than any agreement. On the 20th July, we expect the bill restraining the trade of this province to Great Britain, Ireland, and the West Indies, will take place—as we are determined not to trade to these places, the consequence will be a total stagnation. For this unhappy state we are making preparation, and you can easily judge how little is to be expected from persons in these circumstances."

In Great Britain, it seems to have occasioned more surprise than in America. The ministry attributed great influence to their imposing preparations for hostilities, and to the fears of the colonists. They relied on the information of those who had every motive of interest and passion to deceive them. They thought the excitement was partial and that a general system of action on the part of the Colonies was impracticable; and though they saw the flame jetting out from the soil, they could not be made to believe that there was a mass of living fire beneath the surface, which would, before long, destroy the whole fabric of metropolitan authority. Such was the security of the great body of the people of Eng-

* A business correspondent in London.

land ; and what is more difficult to conceive, such appears to have been the confidence of the governors and royal agents in America. The boast of the ministerial adherents in Parliament, that five thousand men could march without opposition from one end of America to the other, was not more presumptuously absurd than the proclamation of General Gage, which was intended to bring the terrified colonists to the foot of the representative of royalty. Whether the ministers themselves really felt the confidence they expressed is another question. The Secretary for the Colonial Department, as we have seen, had access to trustworthy means of information, and it is possible that representations of the state of feeling, and narratives of occurrences in America, marked with the badge of truth, had some influence over the individuals to whom they were immediately addressed. It is believed they produced a partial effect in the mind of Lord Dartmouth. It is not improbable, that even in other members of administration, there was an occasional wavering and uncertainty whether or not to persevere in the policy of coercion. The secret history of Lord North's conciliatory plan, introduced into Parliament in February 1775, is not known, and it is at least a fair conjecture that it was a plausible mode of abandoning his position, and that the insidious policy of effecting a division among the Colonies, was merely the pretext of a skilful parliamentary manager, who unexpectedly found he had given offence to his friends at a time when he most needed support.

MR. DE BERDT TO MR. REED.

London, January 6th, 1775.

There are some things which I must take time to mention to you ; in the first place, I think the hint you gave Lord Dartmouth in your last letter respecting the reception of American petitions, had a favourable effect in the case of the one lately presented from the Congress; as my lord is pleased to say, the King received it graciously. It was delivered by Lord Dartmouth officially, and not by the agents, as was expected.

The alarming situation of American affairs, has at length awakened the commercial body of this country from their lethargy. The mercantile people who are in the American trade, at a large and respectable meeting, agreed *nem. con.* on an immediate petition to Parliament, to be grounded not

on any political principles, nor on any approval of the conduct of the Americans, nor on a supposition of a redress of their injuries, but to be confined to commercial views; stating to our representatives in Parliament the fatal consequences of an entire suspension of trade. If this petition is heard, it will lead to inquiries at the bar of the House, which will enable us to ascertain the real debt due from America; its exports and imports, and in fact, your true importance to us. This petition, you may rest assured, will be followed by others of a similar nature, from all the manufacturing towns, and must throw great weight into the American scale. It appears to me to be the only likely way to bring about accommodation, as it will furnish Ministry, with an excuse for repealing the obnoxious acts, and an opportunity to censure your conduct, and comply with your demands. As a disinterested and independent man, I might go one step further, and say that if America be right, comply with her requisitions; if she be wrong, punish her severely, but let us have no compromise, no mutual concession. As an English merchant I have, by necessity, other feelings, and must advocate more cautious policy. I would supply administration with means to effect an accommodation on the terms they approve, and give them my humble aid to secure (what they so earnestly insist upon) the dignity of our common country. Of this indeed, you may be sure, for I had it from Lord Dartmouth himself, that if the Americans expect that Great Britain will grant all their requisitions, as contained in the petition of Congress, *an accommodation will never take place*. On that you may build for the present. Nothing can, however, be well ascertained until the meeting of Parliament, and the influence which the mercantile interest is likely to have, be fully known. Of all these things you shall be fully advised. Measures have been and will be taken to prevent the meeting of Congress in May, which I fear will irritate. New York is regarded as most likely to disunite from the other colonies, and considerable immunities and advantages will be offered to her in the way of trade, &c., to bring it about; but things are too far gone for such schemes to be effectual.*

* On 25th January, Lord Chatham writes to Lord Shelburne, with reference to the correspondence as to America laid before Parliament, "What a correspondence!—What a dialogue between a Secretary of State and General in such a crisis! could these bundles reach the shades below, the remarks of Ximenes and Cortez upon them would be amusing. I do not wonder the merchants are grown in earnest. What unaccountable manœuvre checked the vigour of the first operation. I hope now at least the good men and true amongst them will be no longer dupes of half wisdom or entire collusion. Where all is to end I do not conjecture,—in perdition I fear. The three regiments are trifling, and the dragoons put me in mind of 'le regiment de cavalerie sur les galeres de Malta' in a scene of Molière." —*Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 386.

MR. DE BERDT TO MR. REED.

London, June 1, 1775.

This week has been big with important intelligence from America. The account of an engagement at Concord, by which the king's troops were defeated, has engrossed the conversation of every body. Captain Darby, who brought the news, sailed from America several days after the vessel which had the government despatches. Lord Dartmouth's secretary, Mr. Pownal, came immediately into the city, and applied to me for intelligence, government not knowing anything about the matter. I promised him to bring Captain Darby to Lord D.'s office; but on applying to the Captain, he declined going. He told me all the particulars, which I immediately communicated to his lordship. As the story is now told, Lord Dartmouth blames the king's officers; but he was too much affected by the account to say much. No one can tell where these things will end.*

In Pennsylvania, and particularly in the capital, the most lively resentment was felt. A want of arms, occasioned by the reluctance of the Assembly to vote supplies, alone prevented the departure of a large body of militia for Boston. Collections were made throughout the wards and neighbouring districts, to purchase ammunition for the New England levies, and to relieve the distress of the inhabitants of Boston, whom General Gage had driven from their homes. These contributions amounted to a considerable sum, and were

* See Lord Dartmouth's letter to General Gage on receiving this news. *Sparks's Washington*, iii. p. 512.—The whole correspondence there published is highly curious. Such was the effect produced on the ministers by the news of the first hostilities. Wraxall (*Memoirs*, vol. ii. 434) has given a very graphic account of the still greater effect of the intelligence of Cornwallis's surrender in 1781. "Lord North," says he, "had not received any intimation of the event, when they (Lord George Germain and the Chancellor) arrived at his door in Downing Street between one and two o'clock. The minister's firmness, and even his presence of mind, which had withstood the riots of June, 1780, gave way for a short time under this awful disaster. I asked Lord George afterwards, how he took the communication when made to him. 'As he would have taken a ball in his breast,' replied Lord George. 'For he opened his arms, exclaiming wildly, as he paced up and down the apartment during a few minutes, "Oh God! it is all over!" words which he repeated many times under emotions of the deepest consternation and distress.' "

most gratefully received and appropriated. The following letter is a characteristic memorial of one who was destined, in the course of a few weeks, "to seal his constancy with his blood."

JOSEPH WARREN TO MR. REED.

Cambridge, May 15, 1775.

DEAR SIR,—

I received your very kind letter, enclosing a bill of exchange of four hundred and twenty dollars, in favour of the distressed poor of Boston, upon Mr. Rotch, which I shall take the first opportunity of sending to him, not doubting but it will be duly honoured. The sympathy which you discover to have, both in our sufferings and successes in opposing the enemies to the country, is a fresh proof of that benevolence and public spirit which I ever found in you. I rejoice that our friends in Philadelphia are united, and that all are at last brought to see the barbarous scheme of oppression which administration has formed. We are all embarked in one bottom; if one colony is enslaved, she will be immediately improved as an engine to subdue the others. This our enemies know, and for this cause they have used every art to divide us one from the other, to encourage every groundless prejudice, which they could hope to separate us. Our arch-traitor, Hutchinson, has laboured hard in this service. He seems fully to have adopted old Juno's maxim—

"Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo."

I send you a few extracts from some of his letters, which have fortunately fallen in my hands. I likewise send you a pamphlet containing the regulations for the army—you are kind enough to say that our friends in Philadelphia will assist with whatever they can, when they know our wants; which fills us with a lively sense of the generosity of your colony. To say the truth, we are in want of almost every thing, but of nothing so much as arms and ammunition; for although much time has been spent in procuring these articles, yet the people never seemed in earnest about the matter until after the engagement of the 19th ult.; and I verily believe, that the night preceding the barbarous outrages committed by the soldiery at Lexington, Concord, &c., there were not fifty people in the whole colony that ever expected any blood would be shed in the contest between us and Great Britain.

The repeated intelligence I received from the best authority, of the sanguinary, malicious temper of the present administration, together with a perfect knowledge of the inhumanity and wickedness of the villains at Boston, who had the ear of General Gage, compelled me to believe that matters would be urged to the last extremity.

Any assistance, of what kind soever, that can be afforded us by our sister

colony in this all-important struggle for the FREEDOM OF AMERICA,* will be received with the warmest gratitude.

I am, dear sir, with much regard and esteem,

Your most humble servant,

JOSEPH WARREN.

The battle of Bunker Hill, the investment of Boston by the provincial forces of New England, and the organization of a military staff by Congress, followed in quick succession, and in less than two months from the affair at Lexington, THE WAR OF THE REVOLUTION had begun. On the 15th of June, Colonel Washington was appointed Commander-in-chief, and in a few days left Philadelphia on his way to camp, accompanied by a number of the most distinguished citizens, and amongst them by Mr. Reed.† What Mr. Reed's views were when he left home, and whether he contemplated joining the service at that time, I have no means of ascertaining, though it is manifest from the unfeigned surprise of his most intimate friends and relatives, that such an intention was confined to his own breast. From Cambridge, he informed his family that he had accepted the post of Secretary to the Commander-in-chief.‡ The first impulse with his friends at Philadelphia was to condemn this step as injudicious, and dangerous in all its consequences to himself and his family, and as injurious to the common cause by withdrawing his ability and exertions from a scene of action where they were peculiarly required. In reply to a suggestion of the peril of the course he had pursued, made by one of his most intimate correspondents, Mr. Reed said, "I have no in-

* Underscored in the original by the writer.

† The officers of the three battalions of Pennsylvania Associated Militia, were ;
First battalion : Colonel John Dickinson ; Lieutenant-Colonel John Chevalier ;
Majors Jacob Morgan and William Coats.

Second battalion : Colonel Daniel Roberdeau ; Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Reed ;
Majors John Cox and John Bayard.

Third battalion : Colonel John Cadwalader ; Lieutenant-Colonel John Nixon ;
Majors Thomas Mifflin and Samuel Meredith.

‡ From the Orderly Book, Cambridge, 4 July, 1775 : "Thomas Mifflin, Esq.,
is appointed by the General, one of his aids-du-camp. Joseph Reed, Esq., is in
like manner appointed secretary, and they are in future to be considered and re-
garded as such."

clination to be hanged for half treason. When a subject draws his sword against his prince, he must cut his way through, if he means afterwards to sit down in safety. I have taken too active a part in what may be called the civil part of opposition, to renounce without disgrace the public cause, when it seems to lead to danger, and have a most sovereign contempt for the man who can plan measures he has not spirit to execute."* The immediate motive with Mr. Reed in remaining at camp, was the urgent and affectionate solicitation of General Washington, and the obvious necessity that there should be some one attached to his family, who, without assuming the character and responsibility of a military adviser, could be freely consulted, and whose talents and services could always be at command. Mr. Reed's habits of mind and education, qualified him peculiarly for this honourable and delicate trust.

During his residence at Cambridge Mr. Reed's correspondence with his friends was much interrupted, and the few letters which are preserved, appear to have been hastily written during the short intervals of leisure which the constant occupation of office afforded him. After the regular investment of the city of Boston was completed, the active duties of the Colonial forces in great measure ceased ; and with the exception of occasional and generally successful projects to distress the enemy by throwing entrenchments nearer, they were exclusively occupied in composing intestine broils, and obviating the difficulties incident to their hasty and imperfect organization. These difficulties were numerous and alarming. The yeomanry

* It is principally from the letters of his immediate relatives and business correspondents that the sacrifice which this step involved may be estimated.

His professional engagements were numerous and intricate. His domestic circumstances such as required his presence at home. His wife, the young mother of two infant children, and in a delicate state of health, but recently transferred from scenes of opulence to the comparative discomfort of a Colonial residence. His means were far from ample, and the chances of pecuniary advancement dependent wholly on steady attention to business. These sacrifices were cheerfully made, and there is not in his correspondence a trace of discontent at the necessity which required them. It is due to "a woman of the Revolution" to say, that the young mother did the absent patriot full justice, by her fortitude and cheerful acquiescence in his thus following the path of honour and public duty.

of New England had assembled in the hope of satisfying revenge in immediate conflict, and the tedium and privations of a siege were restlessly submitted to. Short and ill-defined enlistments had been made, and there was no adequate provision for supplies or pay. There was no opportunity for discipline previous to their arrival at camp, and little inclination to submit to it afterwards. There was every thing to try temper and exhaust patience.

When, and under what circumstances Mr. Reed became acquainted personally with General Washington, I have not been able to ascertain, though, probably it was during the session of the first Congress, when, as appears from Washington's diary, he was in habits of intimacy at Mr. Reed's house.* Their association at the camp at Cambridge, was of a still more intimate and confidential a character. Living in the same quarters, participating in the same personal as well as official anxieties—for to no one among the many strangers and military competitors around him, as to his volunteer-secretary, could he so freely unbosom himself—the Commander-in-chief of the new levies of freedom relied with confiding affection on the friendship and fidelity of Mr. Reed. There, too, originated Reed's friendship—which never abated during their lives—for General Greene, then in command of one of the Rhode Island regiments.

Though nominally the aid to the Commander-in-chief, Mr. Reed was really, as has been intimated, in relations to him of a still more responsible and confidential nature. It is but fair to his reputation, and in no disparagement to others that these relations be understood. It will be seen when the correspondence is resumed, how earnestly General Washington

* *Sparks's Washington*, ii. 504.—“ May 9th, 1775, dined with Stephen Collins. Passed the evening at Joseph Reed's, in company with Colonel Washington, (a fine figure, and a most easy and agreeable address,) R. H. Lee, and Colonel Harrison, three of the Virginia Delegates; besides Mr. and Mrs. Reed, were Mrs. De Berdt, Dr. Shippen, and Thomas Smith. I stayed till twelve o'clock; the conversation being chiefly on the most feasible and prudent method of stopping up the channel of the Delaware, to prevent the coming up of any large ships to the city. I could not perceive the least disposition to accommodate matters.”—*Curwen's Journal*, p. 27.

deplored even a temporary separation, and what value he set upon his services. "My mind," says he in one letter, "is now fully disclosed to you, with this assurance sincerely and affectionately accompanying it, that whilst you are disposed to continue with me, I shall think myself too fortunate and happy to wish for a change." "I could wish, my good friend, that these things may give a spur to your inclination to return. I feel the want of your ready pen greatly." On the 20th of November, 1775, he says of Mr. R. H. Harrison, who was at first the temporary and then the permanent successor of Mr. Reed in his full confidence, "Mr. Harrison, though sensible, clear, and perfectly confidential, has never yet moved upon so large a scale as to comprehend at one view the diversity of matter which comes before me, so as to afford that ready assistance which every man in my situation must stand more or less in need of." Some months after, he thus speaks of the possibility of Mr. Harrison's being compelled to leave him—"If he should go, I shall be really distressed beyond measure, as I know of no persons able to supply your places in this part of the world, with whom I would choose to live in unbounded confidence."

Mr. Sparks in the introduction to the revolutionary correspondence of Washington, has discussed the question of the authorship of the official and other letters at this period with great judgment, and in a spirit which all must appreciate. Whether Washington was, or was not the author of all the letters to which he affixed his signature, is truly, so far as *his* reputation is concerned, "a question rather of curiosity than of essential interest," and if it could be shown,—which it certainly cannot be,—that the mass of his correspondence was conducted by others in his name, it would detract nothing from his fame. As a mere question of historical curiosity, of interest to those whose elevation is far less, and of distinction which the biographer of another has no right to disclaim, it may be examined; and it is one of the proudest honours of the subject of this memoir, that he was selected by Washington, as one whom he could trust with the representation of his opinions at a critical

period of his career, for the public and posterity, and who proved himself competent to the duty.

During the time that Mr. Reed was at head-quarters, a number of very interesting official papers were issued by the Commander-in-chief, most, and probably all of which were from the pen of his secretary. Among the manuscripts in my possession are not only the original draughts of these letters, either in Mr. Reed's handwriting, with occasional interlineations and corrections by Washington, or in that of some very inexpert clerk, with Mr. Reed's endorsement of their being first draughts, but heads of letters given by Washington, from which the draughts were prepared. Wilkinson, in his Memoirs, has published a fac simile of heads in Washington's writing of the first despatch to Congress of the 10th July, 1775.

Most of these are published in Mr. Sparks's collection. The three letters to the President of Congress, dated 4th August, 31st of August, and 21st of September, 1775, are written by Mr. Reed, and altered by General Washington. The letters to Governors Trumbull and Cooke, and General Schuyler, and the address to the inhabitants of Bermuda, were draughted wholly by Mr. Reed, and were sent without alteration. There are also draughts of other letters which either were not sent, or if sent, have not been published, and among them, one wholly in Mr. Reed's writing, which as exhibiting his characteristic vigour of style, deserves a place here. It is the draught of a letter from the Commander-in-chief to General Thomas of the Massachusetts line, who, in a moment of natural irritation at the irregular action of Congress with respect to rank, had expressed an intention to retire. It is as follows, dated July 23d, 1775.

SIR,—

The retirement of a General Officer possessing the confidence of his country and the army at so critical a period, appears to me to be big with fatal consequences both to the public cause and his own reputation. While it is unexecuted I think it my duty to use this last effort to prevent it, and after suggesting these reasons which occur to me, against your resignation, your own virtue and good sense must decide upon it. In the usual contests of empire and ambition, the conscience of a soldier has so little share, that he may very properly insist upon his claims of rank, and extend his preten-

sions even to punctilio;—but in such a cause as this, when the object is neither glory nor extent of territory, but a defence of all that is dear and valuable in private and public life, surely every post ought to be deemed honourable in which a man can serve his country. What matter of triumph will it afford our enemies, that in less than one month, a spirit of discord should show itself in the highest ranks of the army, not to be extinguished by any thing less than a total desertion of duty. How little reason shall we have to boast of American union and patriotism, if at such a time and in such a cause smaller and partial considerations cannot give way to the great and general interest. These remarks not only affect you as a member of the great American body, but as an inhabitant of Massachusetts Bay. Your own Province and the other Colonies have a peculiar and unquestionable claim to your services, and in my opinion you cannot refuse without relinquishing in some degree that character of public virtue and honour which you have hitherto supported. If our cause is just, it ought to be supported; but when shall it find support if gentlemen of merit and experience, unable to conquer the prejudices of a competition, withdraw themselves in the hour of danger? I admit, sir, that your just claims and services have not had due respect,—it is by no means a singular case,—worthy men of all nations and countries have had reasons to make the same complaint, but they did not for this abandon the public cause,—they nobly stifled the dictates of resentment, and made their enemies ashamed of their injustice. And can America afford no such instances of magnanimity? For the sake of your bleeding country,—your devoted Province,—your charter rights,—and by the memories of those brave men who have already fallen in this great cause, I conjure you to banish from your mind every suggestion of anger and disappointment; your country will do ample justice to your merits,—they already do it by the regret and sorrow expressed on this occasion; and the sacrifice you are called to make, will in the judgment of every good man and lover of his country, do you more real honour than the most distinguished victory. You possess the confidence and affection of the troops of this Province particularly;—many of them are not capable of judging the propriety and reasons of your conduct,—should they esteem themselves authorized by your example to leave the service, the consequences may be fatal and irretrievable. There is reason to fear it from the personal attachment of the officers and men, and the obligations that are supposed to arise from these attachments.

But, Sir, the other Colonies have also their claims upon you, not only as a native of America, but an inhabitant of this Province. They have made common cause with it, they have sacrificed their trade, loaded themselves with taxes, and are ready to spill their blood, in vindication of the violated rights of Massachusetts Bay, while all the security and profit of a neutrality have been offered them. But no acts or temptations could seduce them from your side, and leave you a prey to a cruel and perfidious Ministry. Sure these reflections must have some weight with a mind as generous and considerate as yours. How will you be able to answer it to your country and

to your own conscience, if such a step should lead to a division of the army, or the loss and ruin of America be ascribed to measures which your counsels and conduct would have prevented! Before it is too late, I entreat, sir, you would weigh well the greatness of the stake, and upon how much smaller circumstances the fate of empires has depended. Of your own honour and reputation you are the best and only judge; but allow me to say, that a people contending for life and liberty, are seldom disposed to look with a favourable eye upon either men or measures, whose passions, interests or consequences will clash with those inestimable objects. As to myself, sir, be assured, that I shall with pleasure do all in my power to make your situation both easy and honourable, and that the sentiments I have here expressed, flow from a clear opinion that your duty to your country, your posterity, and yourself, most explicitly require your continuance in the service. The order and rank of the commissions is under the consideration of the Continental Congress, whose determination will be received in a few days. It may argue a want of respect to that august body not to wait that decision. But at all events, I shall flatter myself, that these reasons, with others which your own good judgment will suggest, will strengthen your mind against those impressions which are incident to humanity, and laudable to a certain degree, and that the result will be your resolution to assist your country and friends in this day of distress. That you may reap the full reward of honour and public esteem which such a conduct deserves, is the sincere wish of, sir,

Yours, &c.

The intention to resign was abandoned, and General Thomas continued in active service until his death, a few months afterwards, on the Canada frontier.

The well-known letters to General Gage are in the handwriting of a clerk, endorsed by Mr. Reed, and it may fairly be inferred as well from the internal evidence of strong contrast with the well-marked style of the Commander-in-chief, as from the manner in which Mr. Reed refers to the correspondence in his letters to his friends at home, that his pen was employed in it also. In writing to his brother-in-law at Philadelphia, he said: "We have scarcely any news. Both sides are looking and watching each other. Several letters have passed between the generals about our officers, prisoners, who are cruelly used in Boston. Our letter was polite, and avoided all irritation. The answer was indiscreet and affronting. We have sent a reply suitable to it."

As an incident of the drama thus opening,—as a proud contrast for the American reader, and without reference to the less

important question of authorship, I am tempted to insert the three letters which comprised the whole of a correspondence which began in courtesy on one side, and was only interrupted by insolence on the other. It is a significant comment on it, that while the first two letters were published officially in Great Britain within six weeks after they were written, the reply of the American General was carefully suppressed.

TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GAGE.

Head-Quarters, Cambridge, August 11th, 1775.

SIR,—

I understand that the officers engaged in the cause of liberty and their country, who, by the fortune of war have fallen into your hands, have been thrown indiscriminately into a common gaol, appropriated for felons; that no consideration has been had for those of the most respectable rank when languishing with wounds and sickness; and that some have been even amputated in this unworthy situation.

Let your opinion, sir, of the principle which actuates them, be what it may, they suppose that they act from the noblest of all principles, a love of freedom and their country. But political principles, I conceive, are foreign to this point. The obligations arising from the rights of humanity and claims of rank are universally binding and extensive, except in case of retaliation. These, I should have hoped, would have dictated a more tender treatment of those individuals, whom chance or war had put in your power. Nor can I forbear suggesting its fatal tendency to widen that unhappy breach which you and those ministers under whom you act, have repeatedly declared your wish is to see for ever closed.

My duty now makes it necessary to apprise you, that for the future I shall regulate all my conduct towards those gentlemen who are or may be in our possession, exactly by the rule you shall observe towards those of ours now in your custody:—if severity and hardship mark the line of your conduct, painful as it may be to me, your prisoners will feel its effects. But if kindness and humanity are shown to ours, I shall, with pleasure, consider those in our hands only as unfortunate, and they shall receive from me that treatment to which the unfortunate are ever entitled.

I beg to be favoured with an answer as soon as possible, and am, sir, your very humble servant.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON, ESQ.

Boston, 13th August, 1775.

SIR,—

To the glory of civilized nations, humanity and war have been compatible; and compassion to the subdued is become almost a general system. Britons, ever pre-eminent in mercy, have outgone common examples, and overlooked the criminal in the captive. Upon these principles, your prisoners, whose lives, by the law of the land, are destined to the cord, have hitherto been treated with care and kindness, and more comfortably than the king's troops in the hospitals,—indiscriminately, it is true, for I acknowledge no rank that is not derived from the king.

My intelligence from your army would justify severe recrimination. I understand there are some of the king's faithful subjects, taken some time since by the rebels, labouring like negro slaves to gain their daily sustenance, or reduced to the wretched alternative to perish by famine or take arms against their king and country. Those who have made the treatment of the prisoners in my hands, or of your other friends in Boston, a pretence for such measures, found barbarity upon falsehood.

I would willingly hope, sir, that the sentiments of liberality which I have always believed you to possess, will be exerted to correct these misdoings. Be temperate in political disquisition,—give free operation to truth, and punish those who deceive and misrepresent; and not only the effects, but the causes of this unhappy conflict will be removed. Should those under whose usurped authority you act, control such a disposition, and dare to call severity retaliation,—to God, who knows all hearts, be the appeal for the dreadful consequences. I trust that British soldiers, asserting the rights of the state, the laws of the land, the being of the constitution, will meet all events with becoming fortitude. They will court victory with the spirit their cause inspires, and from the same motive will find the patience of martyrs under misfortune.

Till I read your insinuations in regard to ministers, I conceived that I had acted under the king, whose wishes, it is true, as well as those of his ministers, and of every honest man, have been to see this unhappy breach for ever closed: but unfortunately for both countries, those who long since projected the present crisis, and influence the counsels of America, have views very distant from accommodation.

I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,
THOMAS GAGE.

On the 20th inst., the answer was sent from the American head-quarters.

SIR,—

I addressed you on the 11th inst., in terms which gave the fairest scope for that humanity and politeness which were supposed to form a part of your character. I remonstrated with you on the unworthy treatment shown to the officers and citizens of America, whom the fortune of war, chance, or a mistaken confidence had thrown into your hands. Whether British or American, mercy, fortitude, and patience are most pre-eminent; whether our virtuous citizens, whom the hand of tyranny has forced into arms, to defend their wives, their children, and their property, or the mercenary instruments of lawless domination, avarice, and revenge, best deserve the appellation of rebels, and the punishment of that cord which your affected clemency has borne to inflict; whether the authority under which I act is usurped, or founded on the genuine principles of liberty, were altogether foreign to the subject. I purposely avoided all political disquisition; nor will I now avail myself of those advantages which the sacred cause of my country, of liberty, and of human nature give me over you; much less shall I stoop to retort and invective,—but the intelligence you say you have received from our army requires a reply. I have taken time, sir, to make a strict inquiry, and find it has not the least foundation in truth. Not only your officers and soldiers have been treated with the tenderness due to fellow-citizens and brethren, but even those execrable parricides, whose counsels and aid have deluged their country with blood, have been protected from the fury of a justly outraged people. Far from compelling or permitting their assistance, I am embarrassed with the numbers who crowd to our camp, animated with the purest principles of virtue and love to their country. You advise me to give free operation to truth, and to punish misrepresentation and falsehood. If experience stamps value upon counsel, yours must have a weight which few can claim. You best can tell how far the convulsion which has brought such ruin on both countries, and shaken the mighty empire of Britain to its foundation, may be traced to these malignant causes. You affect to despise all rank not derived from the same source with your own. I cannot conceive one more honourable than that which flows from the uncorrupted choice of a brave and free people, the purest source and original fountain of all power. Far from making it a plea for cruelty, a mind of true magnanimity and enlarged ideas would comprehend and respect it.

What may have been the ministerial views which have precipitated the present crisis, Lexington, Concord, and Charlestown can best declare. May that God to whom you then appealed, judge between America and you. Under his providence, those who influence the councils of America, and all the other inhabitants of the United Colonies, at the hazard of their lives are determined to hand down to posterity those just and invaluable privileges which they received from their ancestors. I shall now, sir, close my correspondence with you, perhaps for ever. If your officers, our prisoners, receive a treatment from me different from that I wished to show them, they and you will remember the occasion of it. I am, sir, your very humble servant, &c.

On the day after General Gage's letter was received, Mr. Reed wrote, by order of the Commander-in-chief, to the Council of Massachusetts, directing rigorous and retaliatory measures to be adopted towards the prisoners, though in a few days the order was revoked, and they were directed to show "every indulgence and civility to the prisoners, so long as they demean themselves with decency and good manners. As they have committed no hostility against the people of this country, they have a just claim to mild treatment; and the General does not doubt that your conduct towards them will be such as to compel their grateful acknowledgment that Americans are as merciful as they are brave."

The siege of Boston is one of the most remarkable incidents of the war. Within six weeks from the time when the first blood was shed, the whole British army, strong in numbers, discipline, and equipment, commanded by experienced and gallant officers, sustained by a naval force that could in great measure relieve their necessities, and always secure their escape, was shut up within the narrow precincts of a small colonial city, and never after its bloody success at Bunker Hill, was it able or willing to act offensively against the raw levies which watched them. What plans were projected in the British councils of war are not known,—none were attempted, and probably none thought of; while in the American camp the project of an assault on the town was repeatedly agitated and urged by General Washington, and only and most reluctantly abandoned as requiring more steadiness and complete discipline than he had a right so soon to expect. Every day the American lines were drawn closer and closer round the enemy, and when Mr. Reed's return home was determined on, it was postponed from day to day, in the confident hope that an offensive movement would be made, in which the services of every one of America's young soldiers might be needed. Such was the contrast of feeling between the recruits of the Colonies and the veterans of the Mother Country, even at the outset of the war.

With what spirit Mr. Reed entered on his new line of life, and how cheerfully he made the sacrifice which absence involved, will be seen in the correspondence with his intimate friends, which will be now resumed.

July 26th. To Mrs. Reed.—“Our family is much reduced by the departure of General Lee, who has taken the command of part of the army, and has his quarters four miles from us, at General Royal’s. I am glad to find the children are so well, and hope they may continue thus, though my heart would be more at ease if you were in the country, late in the season as it is. You will hear and know what is to be done as to law business, of which I beg you to give me the earliest intimation.* If no alteration is made, but courts go on as usual, I shall certainly return so as to be at the Fall Terms, and at all events I shall endeavour to come after a little time, even if I should return here again. But every thing of this kind must depend on events here, which are very uncertain. I do not pretend to much or any military knowledge, but with you I may venture an opinion that the enemy never will attempt a passage through this place. They may endeavour to burn it from floating batteries, but they must be more than madmen to think of breaking through the lines we have thrown up. If their loss was so great in forcing entrenchments which were the work of a single night, what must it be to attack these which have been forming for six weeks, and are provided with cannon, &c.? I think it most probable they will get Boston so strongly fortified that it may be defended by a small force, and then send detachments by water, who will land in different parts of the country, and lay it waste as far as they dare. This is your own side—on the other I will give you the news, which you may tear off and show, if you think proper.† Good night, my dear love!—don’t think of me too much or too little!”

TO MR. PETTIT.

Cambridge, August 7th.

Do you not think our posts are in great danger in crossing the North River in the manner they do? One intercepted mail might do a deal of

* The professional reader will appreciate these anxieties, and may be interested in an extract from a letter to Mr. Reed, from one of his students, Mr. Andrew Hodge. “Business decreases little or none. I was at the sheriff’s last week, to get the number of actions to September term. I found three hundred and seventy-six writs then issued. Clark said he expected fifty or sixty summonses more that week, and above one hundred capias the next; these will make a very good docket.—Chester court begins the 30th of this month, which I shall attend, and take care of your docket, for fear your clients should go to some other attorney, thinking their business will be neglected if no one attends on your account, and appears for them. There will be time to hear from you before Bucks court: you will be pleased to let me know whether I must attend there or not.”—At a later period General Washington wrote to R. H. Lee to make intercess with Chief Justice Chew, with a view to Mr. Reed’s professional accommodation.—*Sparks’s Washington*, iii. 136.

† This portion of the letter is lost.

mischief, as I know several beside myself write every week, and say something not so proper for Gage's inspection. I think you should at least give them directions to have a weight in readiness to sink the mail if there is any danger. You will have heard before this, what an anxiety we are in about some letters intercepted at Rhode Island. We have had nothing of any consequence in camp for several days. The enemy having more ammunition to sport than we have, divert themselves every day with cannonading our lines, but with very little effect, except where the imprudence of some of our own people exposes them to danger. Two were killed at the lines last week, by running after cannon-shot. We scarcely lie down or rise up, but with the expectation that the night or the day must produce some important event. But here are six weeks passed away in mutual preparations, and I believe both sides have got in such readiness as to leave those on the defensive little to fear. General Gage has built thirteen boats, each of which will carry sixty men, and they have for several days been practising the men to row them about in Boston harbour, to embark and re-embark, and from which we may suppose some party is to be made by water.

Our camp continues very healthy. Provisions of all kinds cheap and plenty, and what is of more consequence, discipline and good order prevail more and more every day. A company of Virginia riflemen came in yesterday, very healthy and in good spirits. But they are grown so terrible to the regulars, that nothing is to be seen over the breastwork but a hat. Major Tupper went down on Saturday to accompany a gentleman who had leave to confer with another on the Roxbury lines. The enemy sent a captain, but the Major refused to stay, unless an officer of equal rank met him, which was complied with. The business requiring some writing, they went into a house within the enemy's sentries, when they sent for some liquor, and every toast given by Major Urquhart and the other officers, expressed their wishes to put an end to the quarrel. But at the same time they told him they were soon coming out. Our officers told them we were ready, and if they would give us notice we would meet them with an equal number of men. Time must discover whether this intention is real. A vessel arrived yesterday from England, and it is reported some of their plunderers have returned from a sheep-stealing expedition with tolerable success. General Gage is preparing fuel for winter—it is very scarce at present. The inhabitants of Boston not specially forbidden, are coming out every day, after being searched to see whether they have any merchandize, plate, or more than £5 in cash. They are scattered through the country in a very distressed condition, but you hear very little complaint; the good of their country, and the hope of revenge extinguish every other sentiment. I am glad to find the military spirit does not abate in Philadelphia. I fear there will be more occasion for it than is generally expected. Captain Darby's private accounts differ very essentially from the newspapers he brought. He says the general sentiment is against us, and even the London merchants who have petitioned, are at heart our enemies, which the

Ministry well know. The commencement of hostilities was the wonder of a day, and then little thought of. Stocks only fell $1\frac{1}{2}$ per. cent. which they often do on the slightest alarm. A minister never dreads a fall till it gets to 8 per cent.

TO THOMAS BRADFORD.

August 21st.

"Captain Ross arrived here on Friday evening with the powder. It was a most seasonable supply. I can hardly look back without shuddering at our situation before this increase of our stock. Stock, did I say? It was next to nothing. Almost the whole powder of the army was in the cartridge-boxes, and there not twenty rounds a man. We are informed the clothing of 700 men is landed and stopped in Philadelphia; if it is there, it ought to be forwarded. Yesterday they sent us out from Boston Draper's paper, containing a long letter from Colonel Garrison to the General, one from John Adams to his wife, and another to Colonel Warren. The Ministerialists exult much at having made a great discovery, but there is little in Colonel Garrison's letter but a complaint that the Massachusetts men are selfish, and an anecdote of his disappointment in an intrigue with his laundress's daughter. Adams's letter to his wife complains of the whims, caprice, superstition, vanity, and fidgets of his compatriots, from the beginning to the end of the journey. His letter to Warren complains of a delegate of great fortune and piddling genius, whose fame has been trumpeted so loudly as to give a silly cast to all their proceedings.* You will be at no loss to guess who is meant. I could not get the paper to send, but I copied some of the extracts for Mrs. Reed, whose cheerful acquiescence in my absence entitles her to every preferable attention and mark of my regard. I have not forbid her communicating them if the enemies of America, with you as they do here, exult at the idea of having made great discoveries. Adams's letter is short and decisive, and points out our true line of conduct, which we must come to sooner or later if we expect peace and reconciliation on proper terms. There has not a random shot of a rifleman last week done any execution worth mentioning. A letter from a Selectman in Boston to his son in our camp, advises him to quit it, as there was to be some important stroke made in a few days. We do not pay much regard to this; it is very improbable he should know what they do or do not intend. Our lines are so strong we have nothing to fear but a surprise. If there is any thing in it, we conclude it must be a bombardment for which they have been for some time preparing. We heard from Schuyler about eight days ago. He is preparing to cross the Lake. I think with you, your news from him will be more important than from hence, and that it will not be long before you

* These letters have since been published in John Adams's Familiar Letters.

have it. We have several St. Francis Indians here, very friendly, and well disposed to our interests. They are about 45 leagues from Quebec, and are the savages we had the most reason to fear. All Carleton's plans to stimulate them and the Canadians against us have ended in shame and disappointment. Mr. Mifflin is appointed Quarter-Master General, Mr. Moylan, Muster-Master General, and the General is providing for other gentlemen as fast as he can, but there are more mouths than meat. Great health, good humour, and a noble candour prevail through the whole camp."

Some of the anxieties at head-quarters, arising from the scant allowance of ammunition, and imperfect discipline among the troops, are thus described in a letter to Mr. Bradford.

August 24th:—“We have had a report of the arrival of the soldiers' clothing, but we have been the sport of so many rumours that we suspended our belief till your letters and others confirmed it. What madness can possess those people who talk of sending it back, while General Gage is actually permitting the soldiery to plunder Boston, and merchandise of all kinds is carried on board the men of war and transports. While our army is half naked, to spurn the bounty which Providence has cast upon us, would be folly in the extreme. If you do not know what to do with it among yourselves, let it be sent hither, this is the proper mode of conveyance into Boston. The word “*Powder*” in a letter, sets us all a tiptoe. We have been in a terrible situation, occasioned by a mistake in a return; we reckoned upon three hundred quarter casks and had but thirty-two barrels—not above nine cartridges to a man to the whole army, but the late supply from Philadelphia has relieved us. All our heavy artillery was useless, and even now we are compelled to a very severe economy. I suppose the Congress have directed a committee to forward any that may arrive. If they have not, those gentlemen who will do this necessary service will perform the most essential their country requires. It damps our spirits; we are just in the situation of a man with little money in his pocket, he will do twenty mean things to prevent his breaking in upon his little stock. We are obliged to bear with the rascals on Bunker's Hill, when a few shot now and then in return would keep our men attentive to their business, and give the enemy alarms. A number of transports have sailed on another expedition to plunder the coasts. I suppose you will hear of them in a few days. We cannot help being diverted with some of the letters published in the newspapers. The writers have very fertile inventions. We find many transactions and occurrences there which are to be found no where else. The general accounts of the provisions, mortality and situation of the troops at Boston may be depended on; but the particular accounts of skirmishes and exploits are not above half true, and even the truth is so embellished, that we find it difficult to know it. We did flatter ourselves some time ago, that we had killed several of their officers by single shots; but by all the accounts of the

deserters we have greatly overrated it. We learn from Boston that they have been employed in cutting off all the limbs of the trees in the town, for fascines. That the tories and refugees are regimented, have a green uniform, and are called the king's volunteers. That they declare they must and will penetrate into the country, and will make their first attempt in a few days. From these and other circumstances, we are inclined to think some event of consequence will take place in a short time. But we have been so often disappointed by them that we do not give absolute faith."

29th of September—To Mr. Pettit :—"I have not time to discuss with you the impropriety of a republican government for America. It is a form of government which certainly has contributed more to the happiness of the people than any other, and therefore where practicable, is with me the most eligible. But unless the tyranny and folly of ministers press us into the formation of some new system, I think we may yet return to our old ground of 1763, a most desirable state, if with it we could return to our former unsuspecting confidence and affection for each other, but that is rather to be wished than expected. I am persuaded from the most authentic of all evidence, that the inhabitants of this country, at least their delegates in Congress, are unjustly suspected on this head. Dr. Church, a man highly in the confidence of the people here, a member of their Assembly, &c., has been arrested for carrying on a criminal correspondence with the enemy; his papers were all seized. I have perused the most intimate and confidential letters wrote to him, and am authorized to declare from them that there is no intention of going further than their late charter. This is the sentiment that runs through every one of them, nor have I seen a syllable to the contrary. Adams's letter contains an outline of a temporary plan in which I most heartily concur. I have no notion of being hanged for half treason; when a subject draws his sword against his prince, he must cut his way through, if he means afterwards to sit down in safety.

"We continue here in *statu quo*. Our present employment is building barracks, and making provisions for winter which approaches fast. General Gage has gone to England, where we suppose he will languish in obscurity all the rest of his days, unregarded and unpitied. The soldiery speak of him with the utmost contempt, and the inhabitants of Boston with equal detestation. He was not fit for such tempestuous times, nor from what I can learn is his successor a man of first-rate abilities. We are now engaged in fitting out several armed vessels, which in my opinion we should have done some time ago. While we deliberate, the opportunities are lost. Boston must, I fear, be given up for the common safety. The army and navy here, must at all events be destroyed this winter. Should it be reinforced, the consequences to America will be dreadful. I preach this doctrine with all my might, and hope the Committee of Congress, who are

expected here this week, will confirm it. The General is anxious to strike some decisive stroke, and would have done it before this, if matters had not been misrepresented to him."

On the 8th of September, having drawn his entrenchments still nearer Boston, General Washington submitted to his council of war, the plan of an attack on the city. It was unanimously decided that the attempt should not then be made. On the 18th of October, he renewed the suggestion, and again it was with equal unanimity discouraged. At no period of the war, the duration of which was then certainly not anticipated, did Washington appear so solicitous to act on the offensive as at this time. In his private as well as his official letters, he spoke of an attack on the city as in his judgment feasible, and promising complete if not easy success, and again and again did he urge it on his military council. That he doubted his army's power of endurance and patient acquiescence in the wearisome routine of a siege, is more than probable; and that he anticipated their dissolution, when the term of enlistment expired, is certain. Congress too, may be supposed to have distrusted the stability of its authority with the people, and to the wishes of Congress that something should be done, Washington had not learned to be indifferent. Yet it can scarcely be doubted, that the adverse decision of the general officers was right. To attack a disciplined army in an entrenched city almost insular in its position, even when the attack is made by equals in discipline, is hazardous, but with the raw levies that composed the army at Cambridge, the chances of repulse were vastly multiplied. Had a repulse occurred, the long-delayed and ultimately abandoned plan of an attack on the American lines, would have become part of the pursuit of discomfited assailants, and in all probability a complete dispersion of the Colonial troops ensued.

The result too, though unforeseen, was really as propitious as that of a successful attack could have been. Had the British been able to retain Boston, and at the same time detach a portion of their forces for operations elsewhere, it is probable that the consequences which Washington and Congress so reasonably dreaded, from what seemed to them to be inaction, would have occurred; but the inglorious retreat from Boston to Halifax,

and the abandonment of the very spots which in the first battles they had thought worth fighting for at the expense of so much blood, were as substantial triumphs as could be desired. The scene of action being afterwards changed by the attack on New York, aroused new feelings, and the Declaration of Independence followed in time to prevent any reaction in the popular sentiment.

In the interval between the two councils of war, the expedition of Arnold through the wilderness to Quebec was carried into execution, and on or about the 20th of October, a committee of Congress, consisting of Dr. Franklin, Mr. Lynch, and Colonel Harrison, arrived at camp, with a view to a personal inspection of the state of the army, and a conference with the Commander-in-chief. Among the original papers in my possession, are the original queries or points of consultation propounded by Washington, and in his handwriting. In the margin are short notes of the answers, in the writing of Mr. Reed. They relate generally to the details of the organization of the army. The last is the following :

"The council of war, having, in consequence of an intimation from Congress, deliberated on the expediency of an attack upon the troops in the town of Boston, and determined that at present it was not practicable; the General wishes to know how far it may be deemed proper and advisable to avail himself of the season to destroy the troops who propose to winter in Boston, by a bombardment, (when the harbour is blocked up,) or in other words, whether the loss of the town, and the property therein, are so to be considered, as that an attack upon the troops there should be avoided, when it evidently appears that the town must, of consequence, be destroyed."

In the margin is written by Mr. Reed,—

"The committee think this too important to be determined by them. They, therefore, refer it to Congress."

The student of our history is aware that the report of this committee to Congress, was made on the 2d of November, and debated until the 22d of December, when it was resolved, "That if General Washington and his council of war should be of opinion that a successful attack may be made on the troops in Boston, he do it in any manner he may think expedient, notwithstanding the town and property in it may thereby

be destroyed,"—and it was in communicating this resolution, that John Hancock wrote his memorable letter to Washington, closing it with these words, " You will notice the resolution relative to an attack upon Boston. This passed, after a most serious debate in a committee of the whole House, and the execution was referred to you. May God crown your attempt with success, though individually I may be the greatest sufferer."

The arrest of Dr. Benjamin Church, the surgeon-general of the army, was the only other incident of interest, that occurred before Mr. Reed left the camp. The degree of guilt imputable to this unfortunate man has never yet been ascertained. That he was in correspondence with the members of his family in Boston, and in the British interest, and that this correspondence was conducted in cipher and under suspicious circumstances is certain. It is, however, equally clear, that the intercepted letter contained no disclosure of moment, or the least expression of opinion detrimental to the cause of his country. In the judgment of the Commander-in-chief, and the Provincial Congress, of which Dr. Church was a member, the fact of his corresponding, however innocently, with those who were associated with the enemy, involved sufficient guilt. He remained a long time in close confinement, and after an ingenious defence made in person, was expelled from the Congress. He languished in obscurity for several years, and then sailed for the West Indies. The vessel foundered at sea. During his confinement in prison, at Cambridge, Dr. Church wrote two long and earnest letters to Mr. Reed, soliciting his good offices with the Commander-in-chief, and as far as possible extenuating his own conduct. This was one of the very few instances of infidelity that occurred during the war.*

Mr. Reed left camp, for Philadelphia, on the 29th of October, having been temporarily succeeded in his office of secretary, by Robert H. Harrison of Maryland.

* Dr. Church's letter will be found, at length, in Aitkin's Pennsylvania Magazine for February, 1776.

CHAPTER VI.

1775—1776.

Correspondence of Washington, in 1775—His secretaries—Battery on Letchmore's Point—Letters from Colonel Moylan—Canada campaign—Charles Lee at Rhode Island and New York—Naval operations—Washington's correspondence from camp, 1776.

DURING Mr. Reed's absence at camp, Philadelphia was the scene of constant agitation, and dispute between the loyalists, both in and out of the Assembly, and the patriotic party, as represented by the armed associations and committees of safety. In the Assembly, the loyalists were so far successful, as to keep that body in a condition of imbecile perplexity. Its sessions were secret; its councils uncertain and fluctuating. Whilst it thus discredited itself, the partisan bodies out of doors gained the confidence which singleness of purpose is sure to inspire. They soon had a complete triumph. It is not within the scope of this memoir to attempt minutely to illustrate these disputes. They terminated, as will be seen, in the virtual dissolution of the Assembly, in June of the following year, and the establishment of the Republican Constitution of 1776.

It is much to be regretted, that all Mr. Reed's letters on political subjects, especially those to General Washington, to whom he unbosomed himself with all the freedom of the most confiding friendship, have been lost. No copies were preserved by the writer, and it is probable that the Commander-in-chief, fearing for the security of a correspondence so entirely confidential in his camp at Cambridge, destroyed them. We can only infer their contents from some of the answers.

General Washington's letters to his Philadelphia friend show the warm friendship which existed between them, and tell

in the simplest and least elaborate manner, the various incidents of annoyance and perplexity which marked the opening scenes of the war, and over which the peculiar force of Washington's character, alone could have triumphed.*

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Cambridge, 30th October, 1775.

DEAR SIR,—

After you left this yesterday, Mr. Tudor presented me with the enclosed. As there may be some observations worthy of notice, I forward it to you, that it may be presented to the Congress: but I would have his remarks upon the frequency of general courts martial considered with some degree of caution, for although the nature of his office affords him the best opportunity of discovering the imperfection of the present Rules and Regulations for the Army, yet a desire of lessening his own trouble, may induce him to transfer many matters from a general court martial, where he is the principal actor, to regimental courts where he has nothing to do. I do not know that this is the case, but as it may be, I think it ought not to be lost sight of.

In your conference with Mr. Bache, be so good as to ask him whether the two posts which leave Philadelphia for the southward, both go through Alexandria, and if only one, which of them it is, the Tuesday's or Saturday's, that I may know how to order my letters from this place.

My letter to Colonel Harrison, on the subject we were speaking of, is enclosed, and open for your perusal; put a wafer under it and make what use you please of it. Let me know by the post or * * * * * what the world says of men and things. My compliments to Mrs. Reed, and with sincere regard, I remain, dear sir,

Your affectionate humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

JOSEPH REED, Esq.

* In a letter from Professor Sparks to the author, date 21st February, 1838, he says, "The letters from Washington to your grandfather, in '75 and '76, which you were so kind as to send me, and a selection from which I printed, seemed to me the most imperfect I had ever seen from his pen. They were evidently written in great haste, in perfect confidence, and without any thought that they would ever be published. I used more caution in selecting from these letters than from any others." These letters are now for the first time printed entire.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Cambridge, 8th November, 1775.

DEAR SIR,—

The shipwreck of a vessel, said to be from Philadelphia to Boston, near Plymouth, with 120 pipes of wine; 118 of which are saved—another from Boston to Halifax, near Beverly, with about £240 worth of dry goods—the taking of a wood vessel, bound to Boston, by Captain Adams—and the sudden departure of Mr. Randolph, (occasioned by the death of his uncle,) are all the occurrences worth noticing, which have happened since you left this.

I have ordered the wine and goods to this place, for sale; as also the papers; the latter may unfold secrets that may not be pleasing to some of your townsmen: and which, so soon as known, will be communicated.

I have been *happy enough* to convince Captain McPherson, as he says, of the propriety of returning to the Congress—he sets out this day, and I am *happy* in his having an opportunity of laying before them a scheme for the destruction of the naval force of Great Britain. A letter and journal of Colonel Arnold's, to the 13th ultimo, is come to hand, copy of which I inclose to the Congress, and by application to Mr. Thompson, you can see. I think he is in Quebec—if I hear nothing more of him in five days, I shall be sure of it.

I had like to have forgot, what sets heaviest upon my mind; the new arrangement of officers, although we have not enough to constitute the new corps, it hath employed the general officers and myself ever since Thursday last, and we are nearly as we begun.

Connecticut wants no Massachusetts man in their corps. Massachusetts thinks there is no necessity to be introduced amongst them; and New Hampshire says, it is very hard that her valuable and experienced officers, (who are willing to serve,) should be discarded, because her own regiments under the new establishment cannot provide for them.

In short, after a few days' labour, I expect that numbers of officers who have given in their names to serve, must be discarded from Massachusetts, (where the regiments have been numerous, and the number in them small,) and Connecticut completed with a fresh recruit of officers from its own government. This will be departing not only from the principles of common justice, but from the letter of the Resolve agreed on at this place; but at present, I see no help for it. We are to have another meeting upon the matter this day, when something must be hit upon, as time is slipping off. My compliments to Mrs. Reed, and to all inquiring friends. I am, with sincerity and truth, dear sir,

Your affectionate humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S.—I had just finished my letter when a blundering Lieutenant of the blundering Captain Coit, who had just blundered upon two vessels from Nova Scotia, came in with the account of it, and before I could rescue my letter, without knowing what he did, picked up a candle and sprinkled it with grease ; but these are kind of blunders which one can readily excuse. The vessels contain hay, live-stock, poultry, &c., and are now safely moored in Plymouth harbour.

Yours, &c.

G. W——n.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Camp at Cambridge, November 20th, 1775.

Dear Sir:—Your letter of the 4th, from New York, 7th, and — from Philadelphia, (the last by express) are all before me, and gave me the pleasure to hear of your happy meeting with Mrs. Reed, without any other accident than that of leaving a horse by the way.

The hint contained in the last of your letters respecting your continuance in my family : in other words, your wish that I could dispense with it, gives me pain. You already, my dear sir, know my sentiments on this matter: you cannot but be sensible of your importance to me : at the same time, I shall again repeat what I have observed to you before, that I can never think of promoting my convenience at the expense of your interest and inclination. That I feel the want of you, yourself can judge, when I inform you that the peculiar situation of Mr. Randolph's affairs obliged him to leave this soon after you did—that Mr. Baylor, contrary to my expectation, is not in the smallest degree a penman, though spirited and willing—and that Mr. Harrison, though sensible, clever, and perfectly confidential, has never yet moved upon so large a scale as to comprehend at one view the diversity of matter which comes before me, so as to afford that ready assistance which every man in my situation must stand more or less in need of. Mr. Moylan, it is true, is very obliging; he gives me what assistance he can, but other business must necessarily deprive me of his aid in a very short time. This is my situation ;—judge you, therefore, how much I wished for your return, especially as the armed vessels, and the capital change (in the state of this army) about to take place, have added an additional weight to a burthen before too great for me to stand under, with the smallest degree of comfort to my own feelings. My mind is now fully disclosed to you, with this assurance sincerely and affectionately accompanying it, that whilst you are disposed to continue with me, I shall think myself too fortunate and happy to wish for a change.

Doct. Morgan (as director of the hospital) is exceedingly wanted at this place, and ought not to delay his departure for the camp a moment, many

regulations being delayed, and accounts postponed till his arrival. I have given G. S. and Col. P. a hint of the prevailing reports in Connecticut, without intimating from what quarter they came, (for indeed I have received them through different channels) in order to put them upon their guard: they both deny the charge roundly, and wish for an opportunity of vindication. I thought as this information had come to my ears in different ways, it was best to speak to these gentlemen in terms expressive of my abhorrence of such conduct, and of the consequences that might flow from it, and think it will have a good effect. The method you have suggested of the advanced pay, I very much approve of, and would adopt but for the unfortunate cramped state of our treasury, which keeps us for ever under the hatches. Pray urge the necessity of this measure to such members as you may converse with, and the want of cash to pay the troops for the months of October and November, as also to answer the demands of the commissary, quartermaster and contingencies. To do all this, a considerable sum will be necessary. Do not neglect to put that wheel in motion, which is to bring us the shirts, medicines, &c., from New York—they are much wanted here, and cannot be had, I should think, upon better terms than on a loan from the best of kings, so anxiously disposed to promote the welfare of his American subjects.

Dr. Church is gone to Gov. Trumbull, to be disposed of in a Connecticut gaol, without the use of pen, ink, and paper,—to be conversed with in the presence of a magistrate only, and in the English language;—so much for indiscretion, the doctor will say. Your accounts of our dependence upon the people of Great Britain, I religiously believe: it has long been my political creed, that the Ministry durst not have gone on as they did, but under the firmest persuasion that the people were with them. The weather has been unfavourable, however, for the arrival of their transports,—only four companies of the 17th regiment, and two of the artillery, are yet arrived by our last advices from Boston.

Our rascally privateersmen go on at the old rate, mutinying if they cannot do as they please. Those at Plymouth, Beverly, and Portsmouth, have done nothing worth mentioning in the prize way, and no accounts are yet received from those further eastward.

Arnold, by a letter which left him the 27th ult., had then only got to the Chaudiere Pond, and was scarce of provisions; his rear division, under the command of the *noble* Colonel Enos, had, without his privity or consent, left him with three companies, and his expedition (inasmuch as it is to be apprehended that Carlton, with the remains of such force as he had been able to raise, would get into Quebec before him) is, I fear, in a bad way: for further particulars I refer you to Mr. Hancock, who has enclosed to him copies of Arnold's and Enos's letters. This last-named person is not yet arrived at this camp.

I thank you for your frequent mention of Mrs. Washington. I expect she will be in Philadelphia about the time this letter may reach you, on her

way hither; as she and her conductor (who I expect will be Mr. Custis, her son,) are perfect strangers to the road, the stages, and the proper place to cross Hudson's River, (by all means avoiding New York,) I shall be much obliged in your particular instructions and advice to her. I do imagine, as the roads are bad, and the weather cold, her stages must be short, especially as I expect her horses will be pretty much fatigued, as they will, by the time she gets to Philadelphia, have performed a journey of at least four hundred and fifty miles, my express finding her among her friends near Williamsburg, one hundred and fifty miles below my own house.

As you have mentioned nothing in your letters of the cannon, &c., to be had from New York, Ticonderoga, &c., I have, in order to reduce the matter to a certainty, employed Mr. Knox to go to those places, complete our wants, and to provide such military stores as St. John's can spare.

My respectful compliments to Mrs. Reed, &c.

Be assured that I am,

Dear sir, with affectionate regard,

G. WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Camp, November 27, 1775.*

DEAR SIR,—

Your letter of the 16th by post now lies before me, and I thank you for the attention paid to my memorandum. The arrival of money will be an agreeable circumstance. I recollect no occurrence of moment since my last, except the taking possession of Cobble Hill on Wednesday night; this to my great surprise we did, and have worked on ever since without receiving a single shot from Bunker's Hill, the ship, or floating batteries; what all this means we know not, unless some capital stroke is meditating. I have caused two half-moon batteries to be thrown up for occasional use, between Letchmore's Point and the mouth of Cambridge River, and another work at the causey going to Letchmore's Point, to command that pass, and rake the little rivulet which runs by it to Patterson's Fort. Besides these I have been and marked out three places between Sewell's Point and our lines on Roxbury Neck, for works to be thrown up, and occasionally manned in case of a sortie when the bay gets froze.

By order of General Howe, 300 of the poor inhabitants of Boston were landed on Saturday last at Point Shirley, destitute almost of every thing. The instant I got notice of it, I informed a committee of council thereof, that proper care might be taken of them. Yesterday in the evening I received information that one of them was dead, and two more expiring, and the whole in the most miserable and piteous condition. I have ordered pro-

* This letter is now for the first time printed.

visions to them till they can be removed, but am under dreadful apprehensions of their communicating the small-pox, as it is rife in Boston. I have forbid any of them coming to this place on that account.

A ship well fraught with ordinance, ordinance stores, &c., is missing, and gives great uneasiness in Boston; her convoy has been in a fortnight. I have ordered our armed vessels to keep a good look-out for her. The same reasons which restrain you from writing fully, also prevent me. I shall therefore only add that I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate, humble servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

P. S. If any wagon should be coming this way, pray order a quantity of good writing-paper and sealing-wax to head-quarters.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Cambridge, 28th Nov. 1775.

DEAR SIR,—

By post I wrote you yesterday in answer to your letter of the 16th, since which your favours of the 15th and 17th are come to hand. In one of these you justly observe that the sudden departure of Mr. Randolph must cause your absence to be the more sensibly felt. I can truly assure you that I miss you exceedingly, and if an express declaration of this be wanting to hasten your return, I make it most heartily, and with some pleasure, as Mr. Lynch, in a letter of the 13th, (received with yours,) gives this information.

"In consequence of your letter by Colonel Reed, I applied to the Chief Justice, who tells me the Supreme Courts are lately held, and that it will be some time before their term will return, that he knows of no capital suit now depending, and that it is very easy for Colonel Reed to manage matters so as not to let his return to you; I am sure Mr. Chew is so heartily disposed to oblige you, and to serve the cause, that nothing in his power will be wanting."

I could wish, my good friend, that these things may give a spur to your inclination to return, and that I may see you here as soon as convenient, as I feel the want of your ready pen, &c., greatly.

What an astonishing thing it is that those who are employed to sign the Continental bills, should not be able or inclined to do it as fast as they are wanted. They will prove the destruction of the army if they are not more attentive and diligent. Such a dearth of public and want of virtue, such stock-jobbing and fertility in all the low arts to obtain advantages, of one kind or another, in this great change of military arrangement, I never saw before, and pray God I may never be witness to again. What will be the ultimate end of these manœuvres is beyond my scan,—I tremble at the prospect. We have been till this time en-

listing about 3500 men. To engage these I have been obliged to allow furloughs as far as 50 men a regiment: and the officers, I am persuaded, indulge as many more.

The Connecticut troops will not be prevailed upon to stay longer than their term, (saving those who have enlisted for the next campaign, and mostly on furlough,) and such a dirty, mercenary spirit pervades the whole that I should not be at all surprised at any disaster that may happen. In short, after the last of this month our lines will be so weakened that the minute-men and militia must be called in for their defence,—these being under no kind of government themselves, will destroy the little subordination I have been labouring to establish, and run me into one evil whilst I am endeavouring to avoid another; but the lesser must be chosen. Could I have foreseen what I have, and am like to experience, no consideration upon earth should have induced me to accept this command.

A regiment or any subordinate department would have been accompanied with ten times the satisfaction—perhaps the honour.

I think I informed you in my letter of yesterday that we had taken possession and had fortified Cobble Hill and several points round the Bay, between that and Roxbury. In a night or two more we shall begin our work on Letchmore's Point; when doubtless we shall be honoured with their notice, unless General Howe is waiting the favourable moment he has been told of, to aim a capital blow; which is my fixed opinion.

The Congress already know from the general estimate given in (for a month) what sum it will take to supply this army, and that little less than 275,000 dollars will answer the purpose.

Pray impress this upon the members, and the necessity of forwarding the last sum voted, as 100,000 dollars will be but a flea-bite to our demands at this time. Did I not in one of my late letters inform you that I had sent Mr. Knox through New York to General Schuyler to see what artillery I could get from those places? He has been set out upon this business about ten days, and I hope will fall in with the Committee of Congress. Powder is also so much wanted that nothing without it can be done.

I wish that matter respecting the punctilio hinted at by you, could come to some decision of Congress. I have done nothing yet in respect to the proposed exchange of prisoners, nor shall I now until I hear from them or you on this subject. I am sorry Mr. White met with a disappointment in the Jerseys, as I could wish not to be under the necessity, from any former encouragement given him, of taking him into my family. I find it is absolutely necessary that the Aids to the Commander-in-chief should be ready at their pen (which I believe he is not) to give that ready assistance that is expected of them; I shall make a lame hand therefore to have two of this kidney.

It would give me singular pleasure to provide for those two gentlemen mentioned in your letter, but believe me, it is beyond the powers of concep-

tion to discover the absurdities and partiality of these people, and the trouble and vexation I have had in the new arrangement of officers. After five, I think, different meetings of the general officers, I have in a manner been obliged to give into the humour and whimsies of the people, or get no army. The officers of one government would not serve in the regiment of another, (although there was to be an entire new creation)—a captain must be in this regiment, a subaltern in that company—in short, I can scarce tell at this moment in what manner they are fixed. Some time hence strangers may be brought in, but it could not be done now, except in an instance or two, without putting too much to the hazard.

I have this instant by express received the agreeable news of the capitulation of Montreal. The account of it you also undoubtedly have. Poor Arnold, I wonder where he is. Enos left him with the rear division of his army, and is now here under arrest.

What can your brethren of the law mean by saying your perquisites as Secretary must be considerable? I am sure they have not amounted to one farthing. Captain Blewer waits, and therefore I shall add no more than that I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient and affectionate servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

P. S. Please to let Colonel Lee know that I answer'd his query by last post respecting the arm'd vessels of this Province, and those fitted out by the Continent.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Nov. 30, 1775, Camp.

DEAR SIR—

Two days ago I wrote fully to you by Captain Blewer—to this letter I refer, since which your favour of the 20th, with the agreeable postscript of the 21st, is come to hand, and demands my acknowledgments for the civility intended Mrs. Washington by you, &c.

I have a very singular pleasure in informing you that by express last night from Cape Ann, I received the glad tidings of the capture of the Nancy storeship from London, by Capt. Manley, contents as per the enclosed copy, (taken by Mr. Pierce, to save me, you must know, the trouble of enumeration.) He unluckily miss'd the greatest prize in the world; their whole ordinance, the ship containing it being just ahead, but he could not have got both; and we must be thankful, as I truly am, for this instance of Divine favour; for nothing surely ever came more apropos—that no part of it may slip through my fingers, (for I have no doubt as this capture was

made in sight of the other vessel, of there being some bold push to recover it) I instantly upon receiving the account, ordered four companies down to protect the stores; teams to be impress'd, to remove them without delay; and Col. Glover to assemble the minute men in the neighbourhood of Cape Ann, to secure the removal to places of safety.

The colouring of that affair at Letchmore's Point has been rather too high. The alacrity of the riflemen and officers upon that occasion did them honour, to which Col. Patterson's regiment and some others were equally entitled, except in a few instances; but the tide wa's at that time so exceedingly high as to compel a large circuit before our men could get to the causey, by which means the enemy, except a small covering party, (distant from the dry land on this side near four hundred yards,) had retreated, or were about to embark; all the shot therefore that pass'd were at a great distance; however, the men went to and over the causey, (except as before mentioned,) spiritedly enough.

This little manœuvre of the enemy is nothing more than a prelude. We have certain advice of a scoundrel from Marblehead, a man of property, having carried into General Howe a true statement of the temper and disposition of the troops towards the new enlistment; and having given him the strongest assurances of the practicability of making himself master of these lines in a very short time, from the disaffection of the soldiery to continue in service. I am endeavouring to counteract him, how effectually time alone can show.

I began our bomb-battery on Letchmore's Point last night; the working party came off at day without having met with any interruption: the weather favoured our operations, the earth being clear of frost; not an officer in the army but looks for an attack. This has no effect upon the Connecticut regiments, they are resolved to go off. My best respects to Mrs. Reed and other friends. Be assured, I am, dear sir, yours affectionately,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

COLONEL MOYLAN TO REED.

Cambridge, December 5th.

I wrote you last Thursday and would have given a good deal that you was here last Saturday when the stores arrived at camp; such universal joy ran through the whole as if each grasped victory in his hand: to crown the glorious scene there intervened one truly ludicrous, which was old Pur. mounted on the large mortar which was fixed in its bed for the occasion, with a bottle of rum in his hand, standing parson to christen, while god-father Mifflin gave it the name of CONGRESS. The huzzas on the occasion I dare say were heard through all the territories of our most gracious sovereign in this Province.

Manly sent in a large ship from Glasgow, bound for Boston, with coals and dry goods amounting per invoice to £3606 sterling. There were a vast number of letters, and what is really extraordinary not one that does not breathe enmity, death and destruction to this fair land, G—d damn them. The shippers of this cargo are Crawford, Anderson, and Co., consigned to James Anderson, who is now actually a captain in the Loyal Scotch Americans at Boston. This gentleman is part owner of ship and cargo. Shall we not condemn them ? I fear—but no more thereon.

Near three hundred more of the poor inhabitants came out on Sunday, and I suppose it was intended as a piece of wit, some wag sealed up a play bill in a blank cover, directed to General Washington. There is one to Lee, one to Mr. Hancock, which as they are directed by the same hand I suppose contain the same wit. The play is the tragedy of Zara, next Friday, and if we had plenty of powder to sport with, what a tragedy could we make of it for them. The time of the Connecticut troops' enlistment being expired, the scoundrels are deserting the lines before we are prepared for such a defection. They have been prevailed upon by threats and persuasion, to stay until the 10th inst., when a body of militia will march in from this, and the New Hampshire Province, to supply their place.

The correspondence and memoirs of this year will be closed by the following affectionate and characteristic letters from the Commander-in-chief and Moylan, dated at Cambridge, in December, 1775, and January 1776. They tell a plain tale of perplexity and endurance.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Camp, December 15.

DEAR SIR,—

Since my last I have had the pleasure of receiving your favours of 28th ult., and 2d inst. I must again express my gratitude for the attentions shown to Mrs. Washington at Philadelphia. It cannot but be pleasing, although it did in some measure impede the progress of her journey on the road. I am much obliged to you for the hints contained in both of the above letters, respecting the jealousies which you say are gone abroad. I have studiously avoided, in all letters intended for the public eye, I mean for that of the Congress,—every expression that could give pain or uneasiness;—and I shall observe the same rule with respect to private letters, further than appears absolutely necessary for the elucidation of facts. I cannot charge myself with incivility, or what, in my opinion, is tantamount, ceremonious civility, to the gentlemen of this Colony; but if such my conduct appears, I will endeavour at a reformation, as I can assure you, my dear Reed, that I wish to walk in such a line as will give most general satisfaction. You know that it was my wish

at first to invite a certain number of the gentlemen of this Colony every day to dinner, but unintentionally, I believe by any body, we some how or other missed of it; if this has given rise to the jealousy, I cannot say that I am sorry for it; at the same time I add, that it was rather owing to inattention, or more properly too much attention to other matters, which caused me to neglect it. The extracts of letters from this camp which so frequently appear in the Pennsylvania papers, are not only written without my knowledge, but without my approbation, as I have always thought they must have a disagreeable tendency; but there is no restraining men's tongues or pens when charged with a little vanity, as in the account given of or rather by the riflemen.

With respect to what you have said of yourself and situation, to what I have said on this subject I can only add, that whilst you leave the door open to my expectation of your return, I shall not think of supplying your place: if ultimately, you resolve against coming, I should be glad to know it as soon as you have determined upon it. The Congress have resolved well in respect to the pay of, and advance to the men, but if they cannot get the money signers to despatch their business, it is of very little avail, for we have not at this time money enough in camp to answer the commissary's and quartermaster's accounts, much less to pay and advance to the troops. Strange conduct this!

The accounts which you have given of the sentiments of the people respecting my conduct is extremely flattering. Pray God I may continue to deserve them in the perplexed and intricate situation I stand in. Our enlistment goes on slow; by the returns last Monday, only 5,917 men are engaged for the ensuing campaign; and yet we are told that we shall get the number wanted as they are only playing off, to see what advantages are to be made, and whether a bounty cannot be extorted either from the public at large, or individuals, in case of a draft; time only can discover this. I doubt the measure exceedingly. The fortunate capture of the storeship has supplied us with flints and many other articles we stood in need of. But we still have our wants. We are securing our approach to Letchmore's Point, unable upon any principle whatever to account for their silence, unless it be to lull us into a fatal security to favour some attempt they may have in view about the time of the great change they expect will take place the last of this month. If this be the drift, they deceive themselves, for, if possible, it has increased my vigilance, and induced me to fortify all the avenues to our camps, to guard against any approaches upon the ice.

If the Virginians are wise, that arch-traitor to the rights of humanity, Lord Dunmore, should be instantly crushed, if it takes the force of the whole Colony to do it—otherwise, like a snow-ball, in rolling, his army will get size, some through fear, some through promises, and some through inclination, joining his standard: but that which renders the measure indispensably necessary, is, the negroes,—for if he gets formidable, numbers of them will be tempted to join who will be afraid to do it without. I am exceed-

ingly happy to find that that villain Connelly is seized: I hope if there is anything to convict him that he will meet with the punishment due to his demerit and treachery.

We impatiently wait for accounts from Arnold—would to God we may hear he is in Quebec—and that all Canada is in our possession. My best respects to Mrs. Reed.

I am, dear sir, your affectionate humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S. The small-pox is in every part of Boston—the soldiers there who have never had it, are, we are told, under inoculation, and considered as a security against any attempt of ours—a third ship-load of people is come out to Point Shirley. If we escape the small-pox in this camp, and the country round about, it will be miraculous. Every precaution that can be, is taken, to guard against this evil, both by the General Court and myself.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Camp, December 25th, 1775.

DEAR SIR—

Since my last, your favours of the 7th and 11th are come to hand, as also the 8th; the first last night, the second by Wednesday's post: for the several pieces of information therein contained, I thank you.

Nothing new has happened in this quarter since my last, except the setting in of a severe spell of cold weather, and considerable fall of snow; which together have interrupted our work on Letchmore's Point; which otherwise would have been completed before this. At first we only intended a bomb battery there, but afterwards constructed two redoubts, in one of which a mortar will be placed at a proper season—a line of communication extends from the point of wood this side of the causey, leading on to Letchmore's Point, quite up to the redoubt. From Boston and Bunker's Hill both, we have received (without injury, except from the first case shot) an irregular fire from cannon and mortars ever since the 17th, but have returned none except upon the ship, which we soon obliged to move off. At the same time that I thank you for stopping visitors in search of preferment, it will give me pleasure to show civilities to others of your recommendation. Indeed no gentleman that is not well known, ought to come here without letters of introduction, as it puts me in an awkward situation with respect to my conduct towards them.

I do not very well understand a paragraph in your letter which seems to be taken from mine to Col. Hancock, expressive of the unwillingness of the Connecticut troops to be deemed Continental. If you did not misconceive what Col. Hancock read—he read what I never wrote, as there is no expression in any of my letters that I can either recollect or find, that has a tendency that way, further than their unwillingness to have officers of other

governments mixed in their corps, in which they are not singular, as the same partiality runs through the whole. I have, in some measure, anticipated the desires of the Connecticut Delegates, by a kind of representation to each of the New England Governments of the impracticability (in my eye) of raising our complement of men by voluntary enlistment, and submitting it to their consideration, whether (if the powers of Government were sufficiently coercive) each town should not be called upon for a proportionable number of recruits; what they will do in the matter, remains to be known. The militia which have supplied the places of the Connecticut regiments, behave much better than I expected, under our wants of wood, barracks, (for they are not yet done,) blankets, &c.; with these, and such men as are re-enlisted, I shall hope, if they will be vigilant and spirited, to give the enemy a warm reception, if they think proper to come out. Our want of powder is inconceivable—a daily waste, and no supply, administers a gloomy prospect.

I fear the destination of the vessels from your port is so generally known, as to defeat the end. Two men-of-war (forty guns), it is said, put into New York the other day, and were instantly ordered out, supposed to be for Virginia.

I am so much indebted for the civilities shown Mrs. Washington on her journey hither, that I hardly know how to go about to acknowledge them. Some of the enclosed, (all of which I beg the favour of you to put into the post-office), are directed to that end. I shall be obliged to you for presenting my thanks to the commanding officers of the two battalions of Philadelphia, for the honours done her and me, as also to any others equally entitled. I very sincerely offer you the compliments of the season, and wish you, Mrs. Reed, and your fireside, the happy return of a great many of them, being, dear sir,

Your most obedient and affectionate humble servant,
GEORGE WASHINGTON.

COLONEL STEPHEN MOYLAN TO REED.

Camp, January 2d, 1776.

Manly is truly our hero of the sea;—poor —— is gone to England—his vessel was not at all calculated for the service; she was fitted out at an enormous expense, did nothing, and struck without firing a gun. Coit I look upon to be a mere blubber, and —— —— are indolent and inactive souls. Their time was out yesterday, and from frequent rubs they got from me (under the General's wings) they feel sore, and decline serving longer. I hope we shall pick out some more active men. It will be possible to bombard Boston from Letchmore's Point; give us powder and authority, for that you know we want, as well as the other. I say give us these, and Boston can be set in flames.

Lee has been lately at Rhode Island, and after laying out works for its defence, which by the bye I do not believe they ever will erect, he seized by his own strength and powers as many of the Tories as he could lay hands on. The test he obliged them to sign, strongly marks the powerful talents of the dictator of them. If I have time I will enclose you a copy of the one Warton and two or three others signed: one of them, which was characteristic of the whole, went to Congress by Capt. Temple. This you must keep for your own perusal, as I believe it was extorted, the persons whose names were subscribed being brought as far as Providence, on their way to camp, to which place they were made to believe they would be brought if they did not comply.*

I have heard of your fleet, and I have been much surprised that any of the difficulties you mention should occur in such a place as Philadelphia. How often have I exclaimed at the delays attending the fitting out our Beverly Fleet. How often have you descanted thereon in your letters;— but I find this country should not bear so much blame as both of us have laid at its door. I wish the scheme of fitting both fleets out was adopted some months earlier; it would have been of infinite advantage to the cause. I believe I told you that Broughton and Sillman were returned; they never entered the River St. Lawrence; indeed, the quantity of provisions ordered to be put on board, was far short for such an expedition:— there is now no help for it. The accounts you give from Virginia are very agreeable,—though I cannot suppose that a want of provisions to support the motley army can be the reason of Dunmore's going on board his vessel again. The letters by a sloop, from him bound to Boston, spoke a very different language; he in some of them says he can spare a great deal to the

* Lee's Rhode Island oath was eminently characteristic. It was as follows:—
“I—here, in the presence of Almighty God, as I hope for ease, honour, and comfort in this world, and happiness in the world to come, most earnestly, devoutly and religiously swear that I will neither directly or indirectly assist the wicked instruments of ministerial tyranny and villany commonly called the King's troops and navy, by furnishing them with provisions and refreshments of any kind, unless authorized by the Continental Congress or Legislature at present established in this particular Colony of Rhode Island. I do also swear, by the Tremendous and Almighty God, that I will neither directly or indirectly convey any intelligence, nor give any advice to the aforesaid enemies described; and that I pledge myself, if I should by any accident get knowledge of such treasons, to inform immediately the Committee of Safety; and as it is justly allowed that when the rights and sacred liberties of a nation or community are invaded, neutrality is not less base and criminal than open and avowed hostility: I do further swear and pledge myself, as I hope for eternal salvation, that I will, whenever called upon by the voice of the Continental Congress, or by that of the Legislature of this particular Colony under their authority, take arms and subject myself to military discipline in defence of the common rights and liberties of America. So help me God.”

army in Boston. I need not tell you that this sloop was taken by Manly; the Congress have all the letters, and of a very interesting nature they are.

We have as late accounts from Arnold as the 26th November, and hear that General Montgomery joined him with 2000 men the 1st of last month—that Carleton had got into Quebec, where he had collected of new recruits, sailors, English, Scotch, and Irish inhabitants, many sailors, the whole amounting to about 1200 men: that Montgomery was preparing to attack the town, in which I heartily pray to God to give him his usual success. The Congress is still sitting, and I am glad of it,—will they now hesitate? Look at the King's speech,—it is enclosed in this, or in the General's letter to you. Will they not immediately send embassies to some foreign Powers?—will they not declare what his Most Gracious Majesty insists on, they have already done?—will they not strain every nerve to accomplish it?—are there remaining any hopes of a desirable alternative? They are men of sense, and will act right.

I should like vastly to go with full and ample powers from the United States of America to Spain; if my old friend Wall is still living, and he had influence, I am sure I could do service there. I find this will be a farrago before I have done with it; but let it be, you must excuse the inelegance of the performance.

By your asking me whether a bombardment of Boston would be practicable if we had the *sine qua non*, I flatter myself there is expectation of some coming this way; would to God it was come, for we really are tired of inaction, and I think every thing depends upon a push being made this winter. In Lee's absence, a friend of ours on the Hill thought to have plucked some laurels on Bunker's Hill, but it ended in fume, as I believe every thing in that quarter will do, if he is absent—oh! how he fretted on his return, for giving an alarm: it interfered with a favourite plan, which must now be postponed. The Bay is open—every thing thaws here, except Old Put. He is still as hard as ever, crying out for powder—powder,—ye gods, give us powder. Why put off the open trade to the 1st of March?—but they know best. The scarcity of coarse linens, Osnaburghs and cloths is very alarming. Why are not vessels sent out this winter from those ports which will continue open by God Almighty's permission? Will not Congress follow the good example of the Almighty, and open them to all the world?—the King's speech is the key to open all ports. It is near eleven, and I have to go to Foxcroft's—good night—if any thing occurs before the express goes north worth your notice you shall hear it.

I am just informed all the vessels are now in port, the officers and men quitted them; what a pity, as vessels are every day arriving: indeed the chance of taking any, is pretty well over, as a man-of-war is stationed so as to command the entrance of Beverly, Salem, and Marblehead—we must have ships to cope with them. I shall set out to-morrow and try to get some of them to sea while the weather continues mild. Five hundred men

of the Irish reinforcement arrived within these few days at Boston; if this weather continues there is a chance of the whole getting in.

Eight o'clock at night. A very intelligent man, got out of Boston this day, says two of the regiments of the Irish embarkation, pushed for the River St. Lawrence; it was doubted whether they could get up. Two regiments are gone to Halifax, and the remainder, as above mentioned, arrived at Boston. The transports are already with their water on board; that three hundred and sixty marines are on board nine transports, under cover of a man-of-war, now being in Nantasket Roads—it is given out that they are going to Long Island—that the enemy have not the least thought of making an attack upon our lines, but will be very thankful if we let them rest in peace; that General Burgoyne spread it amongst the soldiers that the dispute would certainly be made up, in order to keep them quiet, and that it was for that purpose he was going home; that there is intelligence at Boston of four vessels having sailed for this continent, laden with arms and ammunition, from Hispaniola, forty-nine days out this day; that a sloop of one hundred tons burthen was near full of like materials, and would soon sail; he also says that it was generally thought in Britain, that Nova Scotia was in our possession. I remain, truly yours.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

January 4th, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—

Since my last I have received your obliging favours of the 19th and 23d ulto. and thank you for the articles of intelligence therein contained, as I also do for the buttons which accompanied the last letter, altho' I had got a set better, I think, made at Concord. I am exceedingly glad to find that things wear a better face in Virginia than they did some time ago; but I do not think that any thing less than the loss of life or liberty, will free the Colony from the effects of Lord Dunmore's resentments and villanies.

We are at length favoured with a sight of his Majesty's most gracious speech, breathing sentiments of tenderness and compassion for his deluded American subjects; the echo has not yet come to hand, but we know what it must be, and as Lord North said, and we ought to have believed, (and acted accordingly,) we now know the ultimatum of British justice. The speech I send you; a volume of them was sent out by the Boston gentry, and farcical enough, we gave great joy to them, (the red coats I mean,) without knowing or intending it, for on that day, the day which gave being to the new army, (but before the proclamation came to hand,) we had hoisted the union flag in compliment to the United Colonies; but behold! it was received in Boston as a token of the deep impression the speech had made upon us, and as a signal of submission, so we heard by a person out of

Boston last night. By this time I presume they begin to think it strange that we have not made a formal surrender of our lines. Admiral Shuldam is arrived at Boston. The 55th and greatest part, if not all the 17th regiments are also got in there; the rest of the 5th regiment from Ireland were intended for Halifax and Quebec; those for the first, have arrived there, the others, we know not where they are got to.

It is easier to conceive than to describe the situation of my mind for some time past, and my feelings under our present circumstances. Search the vast volumes of history through, and I much question whether a case similar to ours is to be found; to wit, to maintain a post against the flower of the British troops for six months together, without _____ and at the end of them, to have one army disbanded and another to raise, within the same distance of a reinforced enemy; it is too much to attempt—what may be the final issue of the last manœuvre, time only can tell. I wish this month was well over our heads. The same desire of retiring into a chimney corner, seized the troops of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, (so soon as their time expired,) as had worked upon those of Connecticut, notwithstanding many of them made a tender of their services to continue till the lines could be sufficiently strengthened. We are now left with a good deal less than half-raised regiments, and about five thousand militia, who only stand engaged to the middle of this month, when, according to custom, they will depart, let the necessity of their stay be ever so urgent; thus it is, that for more than two months past I have scarcely emerged from one difficulty before I have plunged into another. How it will end, God in his great goodness will direct; I am thankful for his protection to this time. We are told that we shall soon get the army completed, but I have been told so many things which have never come to pass, that I distrust every thing.

I fear your fleet has been so long in fitting, and the destination of it so well known, that the end will be defeated if the vessels escape. How is the arrival of French troops in the West Indies, and the hostile appearance there, to be reconciled with that part of the king's speech, wherein he assures Parliament, "that as well from the assurances I have received as from the general appearance of affairs in Europe, I see no probability that the measures which you may adopt will be interrupted by disputes with any foreign power."

I hope the Congress will not think of adjourning at so important and critical a juncture as this. I wish they would keep a watchful eye to New York. From Captain Sears's account (now here) much is to be apprehended from that quarter. A fleet is now fitting out at Boston, consisting of five transports and two bomb-vessels, under convoy of the Scarborough and Fowey men-of-war. Three hundred, some say, others more, troops are on board, with flat-bottomed boats. It is whispered, as if designedly, that they are intended for New Port, but it is generally believed that they are bound either to Long Island or Virginia: the other transports are taking in

water, and a good deal of biscuit is baking, some say for the shipping to lay in Nantasket Road, to be out of the way of ice, whilst others think a more important move is in agitation; all, however, is conjecture. I heartily wish you, Mrs. Reed, and family, the compliments of the season, in which the ladies here and family join; be assured that I am, with sincere affection and regard,

Your most obedient servant.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

January 14, 1776, Camp.

DEAR SIR,—

The bearer presents an opportunity to me of acknowledging the receipt of your favours of the 30th ult., (which never came to my hands till last night,) and if I have not done it before, of your other of the 23d preceding.

The hints you have communicated from time to time, not only deserve but do most sincerely and cordially meet with my thanks. You cannot render a more acceptable service, nor in my estimation give a more convincing proof of your friendship, than by a free, open, and undisguised account of every matter relative to myself, or conduct. I can bear to hear of imputed or real errors; the man who wishes to stand well in the opinion of others must do this, because he is thereby enabled to correct his faults, or remove prejudices which are imbibed against him: for this reason I shall thank you for giving me the opinions of the world upon such points as you know me to be interested in; for as I have but one capital object in view, I could wish to make my conduct coincide with the wishes of mankind as far as I can consistently. I mean without departing from that great line of duty, which, though hid under a cloud for some time from a peculiarity of circumstances, may nevertheless bear a scrutiny. My constant attention to the great and perplexing objects which continually rise to my view, absorbs all lesser considerations, and indeed, scarcely allows me time to reflect that there is such a body in existence as the General Court of this Colony, but when I am reminded of it by a committee; nor can I upon recollection, discover in what instances, (I wish they would be more explicit,) I have been inattentive to, or slighted them. They could not surely conceive that there was a propriety in unbozoming the secrets of an army to them; that it was necessary to ask their opinion of throwing up intrenchments, forming a battalion, &c. &c. : it must therefore be what I before hinted to you, and how to remedy it I hardly know, as I am acquainted with few of the members, never go out of my own lines, or see any of them in them.

I am exceeding sorry to hear that your little fleet has been shut in by the frost. I hope it has sailed ere this, and given you some proof of the utility of it, and enabled the Congress to bestow a little more attention

to the affairs of this army, which suffers exceedingly by their over-much business, or too little attention to it. We are now without any money in our treasury, powder in our magazines, arms in our stores. We are without a brigadier, (the want of which has been twenty times urged,) engineers, expresses, (though a committee has been appointed these two months to establish them,) and by and by when we shall be called upon to take the field, shall not have a tent to lie in; apropos, what is doing with mine ?

These are evils but small in comparison of those which disturb my present repose ; our enlistments are at a stand ; the fears I ever entertained are realized ; that is, the discontented officers (for I do not know how else to account for it), have thrown such difficulties or stumbling-blocks in the way of recruiting, that I no longer entertain a hope of completing the army by voluntary enlistments, and I see no move or likelihood of one, to do it by other means. In the two last weeks we have enlisted but about one thousand men, whereas, I was confidently led to believe, by all the officers I conversed with, that we should by this time have had the regiments nearly completed. Our total number upon paper amounts to about ten thousand five hundred ; but as a large portion of these are returned not joined, I never expect to receive them ; as an ineffectual order has once issued to call them in, another is now gone forth, peremptorily requiring all officers, under pain of being cashiered, and recruits as being treated as deserters, to join their respective regiments by the first day of next month, that I may know my real strength ; but if my fears are not imaginary I shall have a dreadful account of the advanced month's pay. In consequence of the assurances given and my expectation of having at least men enough enlisted to defend our lines, to which may be added my unwillingness of burthening the cause with unnecessary expense, no relief of militia has been ordered in to supply the places of those who are released from their engagements to-morrow, and and on whom (though many have promised to continue out the month) there is no security of their stay.

Thus am I situated with respect to men,—with regard to arms, I am yet worse off :—before the dissolution of the old army, I issued an order directing three judicibus men of each brigade to attend, review, and appraise the good arms of every regiment—and finding a very great unwillingness in the men to part with their arms, at the same time not having it in my power to pay them for the months of November and December, I threatened severely, that every soldier who carried away his firelock without leave, should never receive pay for those months ;—yet so many have been carried off, partly by stealth, but chiefly as condemned, that we have not at this time one hundred guns in the stores, of all that have been taken in the prize-ship and from the soldiery, notwithstanding our regiments are not half completed :—at the same time I am told, and believe it, that to restrain the enlistment to men with arms, you will get but few of the former, and still fewer of the latter which would be good for anything. How to get furnished, I know not—I have applied to this and the neighbouring colonies, but with what

success, time only can tell. The reflection upon my situation, and that of this army, produces many an uneasy hour, when all around me are wrapped in sleep. Few people know the predicament we are in, on a thousand accounts—fewer still will believe, if any disaster happens to these lines, from what cause it flows. I have often thought how much happier I should have been, if, instead of accepting of a command under such circumstances, I had taken my musket upon my shoulder, and entered the ranks;—or if I could have justified the measure to posterity and my own conscience, had retired to the back country, and lived in a wigwam. If I shall be able to rise superior to these, and many other difficulties which might be enumerated, I shall most religiously believe that the finger of Providence is in it, to blind the eyes of our enemies;—for surely, if we get well through this month, it must be for want of their knowing the disadvantages we labour under.

Could I have foreseen the difficulties which have come upon us—could I have known that such a backwardness would have been discovered in the old soldiers to the service, all the generals upon earth should not have convinced me of the propriety of delaying an attack upon Boston till this time. When it can now be attempted, I will not undertake to say,—but this much I will answer for, that no opportunity can present itself earlier than my wishes—but as this letter discloses some interesting truths, I shall be somewhat uneasy till I hear it gets to your hand, although the conveyance is thought safe.

We made a successful attempt, a few nights ago, upon the houses near Bunker's Hill: a party under Major Knowlton crossed upon the mill-dam, the night being dark, and set fire to and burnt down eight out of fourteen which were standing, and which we found they were daily pulling down for fuel—five soldiers and the wife of one of them inhabiting one of the houses, were brought off prisoners; another soldier was killed: none of ours hurt.

Having undoubted information of the embarkation of troops (somewhere from 300 to 500) at Boston, and being convinced that they were designed either for New York Government, (from whence we have some very disagreeable accounts of the conduct of the Tories) or Virginia, I despatched General Lee a few days ago, in order to secure the city of New York from falling into their hands, as the consequences of such a blow might prove fatal to our interests. He is also to inquire a little into the conduct of the Long Islanders, and such others as have by their conduct and declarations proved themselves inimical to the common cause. To effect these purposes, he is to raise volunteers in Connecticut, and call upon the troops of New Jersey, if not contrary to any order of Congress.

By a ship just arrived at Portsmouth, (New Hampshire,) we have London prints to the 2d of November, containing the addresses of Parliament, which contain little more than a repetition of the speech, with assurance of standing by his Majesty with lives and fortunes. The captains (for there were three or four of them passengers) say that we have nothing to expect but the most

vigorous exertions of administration, who have a dead majority upon all questions, although the Duke of Grafton and General Conway have joined the minority, as also the Bishop of Peterborough. These captains affirm confidently, that the five regiments from Ireland cannot any of them have arrived at Halifax, inasmuch as that by a violent storm on the 19th October, the transports were forced (in a very distressful condition) into Milford Haven (Wales), and were not in a condition to put to sea when they left London, and that the weather has been such since, as to prevent heavy-loaded ships from making a passage by this time. One or two transports, they add, were thought to be lost; but these arrived some considerable time ago at Boston, with three companies of the 17th regiment.

Mr. Sayre has been committed to the Tower, upon the information of a certain Lieutenant or Adjutant Richardson (formerly of your city) for treasonable practices—an intention of seizing his Majesty and possessing himself of the Tower, it is said in the crisis, but is admitted to bail, himself in £500, and two sureties in £250 each. What are the conjectures of the wise ones with you, of the French armament in the West Indies? But previous to this, is there any certainty of such an armament? The captains, who are sensible men, heard nothing of this when they left England—nor does there appear any apprehensions on this score in any of the measures or speeches of administration. I should think the Congress will not, ought not to adjourn at this important crisis: but it is highly necessary, when I am at the end of a second sheet of paper, that I should adjourn my account of matters to another letter. I shall therefore, in Mrs. Washington's name, thank you for your good wishes towards her, and with her compliments added to mine to Mrs. Reed, &c., conclude, dear sir, your sincere and affectionate servant.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

January 23d, 1776. Camp.

DEAR SIR—

Real necessity compels me to ask you whether I may entertain any hopes of your returning to my family? If you can make it convenient, and will hint the matter to Col. Harrison, I dare venture to say that Congress will make it agreeable to you in every shape they can. My business increases very fast, and my distresses for want of you, along with it. Mr. Harrison is the only gentleman of my family that can afford me the least assistance in writing. He and Mr. Moylan, whose time must now be solely employed in his department of commissary, have heretofore afforded me their aid, and I have hinted to them, in consequence of what you signified in some former letters, that each (as they have really had a great deal of trouble), should receive one-third of your pay, reserving the other third, contrary to your desire, for yourself;—my distresses and embarrassments are in a way

of being very considerably increased by an occurrence in Virginia, which will, I fear, compel Mr. Garrison to leave me, or suffer considerably by his stay. He has wrote, however, by the last post, to see if his return cannot be dispensed with. If he should go, I shall really be distressed beyond measure, as I know no persons able to supply your places (in this part of the world) with whom I would choose to live in unbounded confidence. In short, for want of an acquaintance with the people hitherward, I know of none which appear to me qualified for the office of Secretary.

The business, as I hinted to you before, is considerably increased by being more comprehensive, and at this time (from the great changes which have and are happening every day) perplexed: so that you would want a good writer, and a methodical man, as an assistant, or copying clerk;—such an one I have no doubt will be allowed, and the choice I leave to yourself, as he should be a person in whose integrity you can confide, and on whose capacity, care, and method, you can rely. At present my time is so much taken up at my desk, that I am obliged to neglect many other essential parts of my duty:—it is absolutely necessary, therefore, for me to have persons that can think for me, as well as execute orders. This it is that pains me when I think of Mr. White's expectation of coming into my family if an opening happens. I can derive no earthly assistance from such a man, and my friend Bayler is much such another, although as good and as obliging a person as any in the world. As it may be necessary that the pay of the under secretary should be fixed, that you may, if you incline to return, and should engage one, know what to promise him, I have wrote to Col. Garrison and Mr. Lynch on this subject. The interruption of the post has prevented the receipt of any letters from the southward since this day week, so that we have had but little knowledge of what is passing in that quarter. The unfortunate repulse of our troops at Quebec—the death of the brave and much to be lamented General Montgomery, and wounding of Colonel Arnold, will, I fear, give a very unfavourable turn to our affairs in that quarter, as I have no opinion at all of W——r's enterprising genius.

Immediately upon the receipt of the unfortunate intelligence, and General Schuyler's intimation of his having no other dependence than upon me for men, I address'd Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, in behalf of the Continent for a regiment each, to be marched forthwith into Canada, and there continued, if need be, till the 1st of January, upon the same establishment of those raising for these lines. It was impossible to spare a man from hence, as we want eight or nine thousand of our establishment, and are obliged to depend upon militia for the defence of our works: equally improper did it appear to me to wait (situated as our affairs were) for a requisition from Congress, after several days' debate, perhaps, when in the mean while all might be lost:—the urgency of the cause, therefore, must apologize to Congress for my adoption of this measure. Governor Trumbull, indeed, anticipated my request, for he and his Council of Safety had voted a regiment before my request had reached him. The General

Court here have also voted another, and I have no doubt of New Hampshire's doing the like, and that the whole will soon be on their march. I have this instant received a letter from New Hampshire, in answer to mine, informing me that they have fully complied with my request of a regiment, appointed the field-officers, and will have the whole in motion as soon as possible. Colonel Warner, and others, we are told, are already on their march, so that it is to be hoped, if these bodies have but a good head, our affairs may still be retrieved in Canada before the King's troops can get reinforced.

They are pulling down the houses in Boston as fast as possible, and we have lately accounts from thence which it is said may be relied on, that General Clinton is actually sailed from thence with a detachment (no accounts making it more than 500) for the southward, some say Virginia, others New York, but all is conjecture. Whether this is the fleet that has been making up for some time at Nantasket, or another, I cannot with certainty say. In my last I informed you, I think, of the expedition I had sent General Lee on to New York. Should Clinton steer his course thither, I hope he will meet with a formidable and proper reception. I shall conclude with informing you that we should have had a formidable work on Letchmore's Point long ago, if it had not been for the frost, and that if Congress mean that we should do any thing this winter, no time must be lost in forwarding powder. I have ordered in militia to take advantage of circumstances, but I see no appearance as yet of a bridge. I am with the greatest truth and sincerity,

Dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

January 31st, 1776. Camp.

MY DEAR SIR—

In my last, (date not recollectcd,) by Mr. John Adams, I communicated my distresses to you, on account of my want of your assistance. Since this, I have been under some concern at doing of it, lest it should precipitate your return before you were ripe for it, or bring on a final resignation, which I am unwilling to think of, if your return can be made convenient and agreeable. True it is, that from a variety of causes, my business has been, and now is, multiplied and perplexed, whilst the means of execution is greatly contracted. This may be a cause for my wishing you here, but no inducement to your coming, if you hesitated before.

I have now to thank you for your favours of the 15th, 16th, and 20th inst., and for the several articles of intelligence which they convey. The ac-

count given of your navy, at the same time that it is exceedingly unfavourable to our wishes, is a little provoking to me, inasmuch as it has deprived us of a necessary article which otherwise would have been sent hither, but which a kind of fatality, I fear, will for ever deprive us of. In the instance of New York, we are not to receive a particle of what you expected would be sent from thence—the time and season is passing away, as I believe the troops in Boston will, before the season for taking the field arrives. I dare say, they are preparing for it now, as we have undoubted intelligence of Clinton's leaving Boston with a number of troops (by different accounts, from four or five hundred to ten companies of grenadiers, and nine of light infantry) believed to be designed for Long Island or New York, in consequence of assurances from Governor Tryon of a powerful aid from the Tories there.

I hope my countrymen (of Virginia) will rise superior to any losses the whole navy of Great Britain can bring on them, and that the destruction of Norfolk, and threatened devastation of other places, will have no other effect than to unite the whole country in one indissoluble band against a nation which seems to be lost to every sense of virtue, and those feelings which distinguish a civilized people from the most barbarous savages. A few more of such flaming arguments as were exhibited at Falmouth and Norfolk, added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning contained in the pamphlet "Common Sense," will not leave numbers at a loss to decide upon the propriety of a separation.

By a letter of the 21st inst., from Wooster, I find that Arnold was continuing the blockade of Quebec the 19th, which under the heaviness of our loss there, is a most favourable circumstance, and exhibits a fresh proof of Arnold's ability and perseverance in the midst of difficulties; the reinforcement ordered to him, will, I hope, complete the entire conquest of Canada this winter; and but for the loss of the gallant chief and his brave followers, I should think the rebuff rather favourable than otherwise; for had the country been subdued by such a handful of men, 'tis more than probable that it would have been left to the defence of a few, and rescued from us in the spring:—our eyes will now not only be open to the importance of holding it, but the numbers which are requisite to that end. In return for your two beef and poultry vessels from New York, I can acquaint you that our Commodore Manly has just taken two ships from White Haven to Boston, with coal and potatoes, and sent them into Plymouth, and fought a tender close by the lighthouse, where the vessels were taken, long enough to give his prizes time to get off, in short, till she thought it best to quit the combat, and he to move off from the men-of-war, which were spectators of this scene. In my last, I think I informed you of my sending General Lee to New York, with intention to secure the Tories of Long Island, &c., and to prevent, if possible, the king's troops from making a lodgment there; but I fear the Congress will be duped by the representation from that Government, or yield to them in such a manner as to become marplots to the expedition;

—the city seems to be entirely under the government of Tryon, and the captains of the man-of-war.

Mrs. Washington desires I will thank you for the picture sent her. Mr. Campbell, whom I never saw to my knowledge, has made a very formidable figure of the Commander-in-chief, giving him a sufficient portion of terror in his countenance. Mrs. Washington also desires her compliments to Mrs. Reed, &c., as I do, and with the sincerest regard and affection, I remain, dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Camp, February 1, 1776.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I had wrote the letter herewith enclosed, before your favour of the 21st came to hand. The account given of the behaviour of the men under General Montgomery is exactly consonant to the opinion I had formed of these people, and such as they will exhibit abundant proofs of in similar cases whenever called upon. Place them behind a parapet, a breast-work, stone-wall, or any thing that will afford them a shelter, and from their knowledge of a fire-lock, they will give a good account of their enemy; but I am as well convinced as if I had seen it, that they will not march boldly up to a work, or stand exposed in a plain, and yet, if we are furnished with the means, and the weather will afford us a passage, and we can get in men (for these three things are necessary) something must be attempted. The men must be brought to face danger; they cannot always have an entrenchment, or a stone-wall as a safeguard or shield, and it is of essential importance that the troops in Boston should be destroyed if possible, before they can be reinforced or removed. This is clearly my opinion, whether circumstances will admit of the trial, and if tried, what will be the event the all-wise Disposer of them alone can tell.

The evils arising from short, or even any limited enlistment of the troops, are greater, and more extensively hurtful than any person, (not an eye-witness to them,) can form any idea of. It takes you two or three months to bring new men in any tolerable degree acquainted with their duty; it takes a longer time to bring a people of the temper and genius of these into such a subordinate way of thinking as is necessary for a soldier; before this is accomplished, the time approaches for their dismissal, and you are beginning to make interest for their continuance for another limited period; in the doing of which you are obliged to relax in your discipline, in order as it were to curry favour with them, by which means the latter part of your time is employed in undoing what the first was accomplishing, and instead of having men always ready to take advantage of circumstances, you must

govern your movements by the circumstances of your enlistment. This is not all; by the time you have got men armed and equipped, the difficulty of doing which is beyond description, and with every new set you have the same trouble to encounter, without the means of doing it, in short, the disadvantages are so great and apparent to me, that I am convinced, uncertain as the continuance of the war is, that the Congress had better determine to give a bounty of twenty, thirty, or even forty dollars to every man who will enlist for the whole time, be it long or short. I intend to write my sentiments fully on this subject to Congress, the first leisure time I have.

I am exceeding sorry to hear that Arnold's wound is in an unfavourable way; his letter to me of the 14th ult. says nothing of this. I fancy Congress have given particular direction respecting General Prescott. I think they ought for more reasons than one.

I am sincerely and affectionately, your most obedient servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S. Be so good as to send the enclosed letter of Randolph's to the post-office.

CHAPTER VII.

1776.

Political parties in Pennsylvania in the spring of 1776—Charter institutions—Charles Thomson's MS.—Influence of Congress—Instruction of Assembly against independence, November 1775—Washington's letters from Cambridge—Plans of attack on Boston—Distress at camp—Letter from Moylan, January 1776—General Charles Lee at New York—Mr. Reed elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly—Letters to Washington on Pennsylvania affairs in March and April '76—Washington's letters from camp—John Armstrong—Putnam—Patrick Henry.

It is not easy to describe with precision the state of political feeling in Pennsylvania at the beginning of the year 1776. So complex were individual relations, and such were the differences of opinion as to modes of redress, even among the accredited friends of liberty, that without more complete access to private correspondence, than one can yet command, there is great danger of doing injustice. There is danger too in such an attempt, of wandering beyond the limits of a personal memoir. Still, Mr. Reed's agency in every movement of the times, makes an incidental notice of the state of parties and public feeling necessary.

There were two well-defined parties in the Province; the friends of government, composed mainly of the adherents of the proprietaries, royalists from conscientious opinion, and from religious scruples, and the greater portion of the Society of Friends; and the revolutionary or active-movement party. There was a third party, or rather a third class of men, earnestly devoted to the cause of the Colonies, but more or less anxious for reconciliation, and more or less prepared for decisive measures of redress. To this class, though with widely different temperaments and

views, belonged Franklin, Dickinson, Thomson, Reed, Mifflin, Morris, McKean, Clymer, and nearly all those who were recognised as the political leaders of the day. Though thinking alike, as to the necessity of moderating the extremity of feeling to which the two leading parties might go, and agreeing as to the inevitable issue of the pending controversy with the Mother Country, unless a change occurred in its policy, there was amongst these leaders great diversity of opinion as to the best mode of bringing the Colonies generally, and Pennsylvania in particular, into effective opposition. Most of them, (perhaps all, with the exception of Mr. McKean, Doctor Franklin, and probably Mr. Clymer,) thought it best, if possible, to continue the charter institutions of Pennsylvania, and by the agency of the Assembly, of which many of them were members, carry on the government even in the crisis of a revolution. To this opinion Mr. Reed adhered, down to a certain period; Charles Thomson and Mr. Dickinson to the end of their lives, never relinquished it.

"Had the Whigs in Assembly," Charles Thomson wrote many years after, when he was looking back calmly on the past, "been left to pursue their own measures, there is every reason to believe they would have effected their purpose, prevented the disunion which has unfortunately taken place, and brought the whole Province as one man, with all the force and weight of government, into the common cause. Danger was fast approaching; the storms which had been gathering, began to burst: the battle of Lexington was fought. Many of the members in Assembly had long held their seats there, and were fond of continuing. They had hitherto joined with very little opposition in defensive measures, and it was evident that rather than give up their seats, and the importance derived thence, they would go still further, and thus might be led step by step till they had advanced too far to retreat. Their past and future conduct justified this conclusion. In the winter session they voted a sum of money to purchase ammunition, and in the summer of 1776, though a majority of the Assembly were of the people called Quakers, they agreed to arm the inhabitants, and ordered five thousand bayonets, and other accoutrements to be made, and as they had not money in the treasury, and could not have the Governor's concurrence in raising money to pay for them, they by a resolve of their own, to which there were but three dissenting voices, ordered £35,000 to be struck in bills of credit, and pledged the faith of the Province for their redemption, thus virtually declaring themselves independent, and assuming the whole power of government.

"The original Constitution of Pennsylvania was very favourable, and well adapted to the present emergency. The Assembly was annual. The election was fixed for a certain day, on which the freemen who were worth £50 met or had a right to meet without summons at their respective county towns, and by ballot chose not only representatives for Assembly, but also sheriff, coroner, commissioners for managing the affairs of the county, and assessors to rate the tax imposed by law upon the estates real and personal, of the several inhabitants. Members of Assembly when chosen, met according to law, on a certain day and chose their speaker, provincial treasurer, and sundry other officers. The House sate on its own adjournments, nor was it in the power of the governor to prorogue or dissolve it. Hence it is apparent, that Pennsylvania had a great advantage over the other Colonies, which by being deprived by their governors of their legal Assemblies, or Houses of Representatives, constitutionally chosen, were forced into conventions. The Assembly of Pennsylvania, if they could be brought to take a part, supplied the place of a convention, with this advantage, that being a part of the Legislature, they preserved the legal forms of government; consequently had more weight and authority among the people."*

As late as the 3d of March, 1776, Mr. Reed seems to have held the same opinions, for in a letter to his brother-in-law, he says : " We shall endeavour to get the Assembly to amend the association, take off the instructions from the delegates, and increase the representation. I hope we shall succeed in all, but some violent spirits have obstructed our measures by calling a convention, or attempting to do so, before we know what the Assembly will do. Great contests have ensued upon it, and the event is yet doubtful."

But between those who to the last endeavoured to sustain the charter institutions, and those who like Mr. Reed and his immediate friends adhered to them only so long as there was a chance of making them effective, there was this difference : that the latter never lost the confidence of the popular party, while the former seem to have been looked on from the beginning, by the ultra-patriots with ill-disguised distrust. This was popular injustice and prejudice, but it existed and was felt. Looking back on these times, we may reasonably doubt whether it would not have been better for the infant state, if the counsels of moderation and conservative patriotism had

* This is a further extract from Mr. Thomson's letter, to Mr. Drayton, (MS.)

prevailed, and the forms of the charter government been made to adapt themselves to the exigencies of the times. It might have saved the evil passions and fierce controversies which arose on the adoption of the Constitution of 1776, and which never abated during its existence. But the doom of the charter was fixed.

The popular party had effective allies in Congress.* It is very apparent that between the New England delegates, who were most urgent for decisive measures, and immediate separation from Great Britain, and the leaders of the extreme movement party in Philadelphia, there was entire concurrence not only of opinion but of action, and no doubt many of the measures resorted to, at first to stimulate, and afterwards to discredit and destroy the Assembly, had their origin in councils in which others besides Philadelphians participated.† From the time the Committee of Safety was organized, there was no intermission of these out-of-door movements. By the charter of the province, a £50 qualification was prescribed for electors to the Assembly. None such was known for the popular Representative committees or conventions. Disaffection to the cause and to the measures of the Congress, was the only disqualification. Those who thence derived their importance were unceasingly active. No opportunity of success was neglected. At the charter elections they invariably brought all their qualified electors to the polls, and when defeated as they generally were by the predominant influence of the loyalist

* The influence of Congress on the politics of Pennsylvania, was constantly felt, sometimes advantageously, sometimes, as in the case of General Arnold, in 1779, very much the reverse. It will be fully traced hereafter in the course of this memoir.

† "Since my first arrival," Mr. Gerry writes home, "in this city, the New England delegates have been in continual war with the advocates of Proprietary interests in Congress and this Colony. These are they who are most in the way of the measures we have purposed, but I think the contest is pretty nearly at an end, and am persuaded that the people of this and the Middle Colonies have a clearer view of these interests, and will use their endeavours to eradicate the ministerial influence of governors, proprietaries and jacobites; and that they now more confide in the politics of the New England Colonies than they ever did in those of their hitherto unequal governments." *Austin's Life of Gerry*, i. 194.

and moderate party, they retired to their committee-rooms to meditate on new and more effective action.

Whilst out of doors, this steady and ultimately resistless influence was at work, and this concert of action between the leaders in and out of Congress was made manifest, the loyalists, comprising in this word all who from any motive, selfish or disinterested, were opposed to resistance to Great Britain, succeeded in forming an ill-assorted and most ineffectual union, not merely with those of the patriots who thought it best in the event of separation, to maintain the charter institutions, but still more completely with those who were opposed to independence or separation in any form. Mr. Dickinson had been mainly instrumental in procuring the adoption of the instructions of 9th November, 1775, to the delegates in Congress, of whom he was one. The language of these instructions was strong enough to justify the assent of the hottest loyalist in the province, " (we direct you) to exert your utmost endeavours to agree upon and recommend such measures as you shall judge to afford the best prospect of obtaining redress of American grievances, and restoring that union and harmony between Great Britain and the Colonies, so essential to the happiness and welfare of both countries. Though the oppressive measures of the British Parliament have compelled us to resist their violence, by force of arms, yet we strictly enjoin you that you in behalf of this Colony, dissent from and utterly reject any propositions, should such be made, that may cause or lead to a separation from our Mother Country, or a change of the form of this government."*

* In *Austin's Gerry*, i. 178, is a very striking letter, dated 20 May, 1776, on this subject. Among the Morris MSS. in this city, are some curious letters on the same point, from General Lee. On 23d January he thus writes, " Your Assembly's injunctions with respect to independence, appear every time I consider them, more nonsensical, foolish and abominable. They operate directly opposite to sound policy. You ought to persuade the people at home, that the d—d king and his d—d ministry never had the least ground for their assertions, that you aim at independence. You ought to suffer the two branches of the House of Bourbon to flatter themselves that separation is your object, that they might be more inclined to assist you in all your necessary wants. Instead of which, these blessed instructions have given a solid ground to the assertions of the king and

It was on the debate upon these instructions, that the motion was made and rejected, to admit the public to the galleries of the House. And so long as the prohibition embodied in these instructions, remained in force, the patriots looked with a jealous eye on the apparent concert which had secured their adoption, and the extent of which they no doubt very much exaggerated.*

If Mr. Reed felt more strongly and acted more cordially with the popular party, than many of his friends around him, much may be attributed to the letters which day after day he received from General Washington, and his other military friends. He had shared in the anxieties of the camp, and well knew how to appreciate them. The Massachusetts delegates, whose firesides were devastated, and whose families were at the mercy of the enemy, could not have felt more strongly than he to whom Washington and his comrades in arms wrote daily thus:

ministry, which before they were destitute of, and at the same time render France and Spain shy of assisting you. By the heavenly God, if you do not act more decisively, we shall be ruined. Decision, decision, ought to be our word. Are we at war, or are we not? Are we not at war with the king, or with whom are we at war? Do not the people of England, though not from zeal, but from want of spirit, support the tyrant? Why are we so eternally whining about a connexion with these people? * * * * Before the late speech and address of thanks, I had some hopes, but since their appearance, I confess I think the knot is cut. You must no longer hobble on one high shoe and one low. When you have conquered I think you may then with more safety, glory, and advantage, return to your former state of relation. The express waits. Adieu." (*MS. Letter.*)

* In *Hutchinson's Posthumous History*, p. 166, he refers to the admission of the public to the debates of the Massachusetts Assembly, as an important element of disaffection. He says, "although the following novelty cannot be mentioned as an instance of their assuming what they had no right to, yet it gave them great additional weight and influence over the people: they had caused a gallery to be built and opened, that all persons that inclined to it, might hear these debates; and a speech well adapted to the galleries, was oftentimes of more service to the cause of liberty, than if its purport had been confined to the members of the House."

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Cambridge, February 10, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—

Your obliging favours of the 29th ult. and 1st inst., are now before me, and claim my particular thanks for the polite attention you pay to my wishes, in an early and regular communication of what is passing in your quarter.

If, my dear sir, you conceive that I took anything wrong or amiss that was conveyed in any of your former letters, you are really mistaken; I only meant to convince you that nothing would give me more real satisfaction than to know the sentiments which are entertained of me by the public, whether they be favourable or otherwise; and urged as a reason, that the man who wished to steer clear of shelves and rocks, must know where they lie. I know—but to declare it, unless to a friend, may be an argument of vanity—the integrity of my own heart. I know the unhappy predicament I stand in. I know that much is expected of me. I know that without men, without arms, without ammunition, without anything fit for the accommodation of a soldier, that little is to be done,—and, which is mortifying, I know that I cannot stand justified to the world, without exposing my own weakness, and injuring the cause by declaring my wants, which I am determined not to do, further than unavoidable necessity brings every man acquainted with them. If, under these disadvantages, I am able to keep above water (as it were) in the esteem of mankind, I shall feel myself happy: but if, from the unknown peculiarity of my circumstances, I suffer in the opinion of the world, I shall not think you take the freedom of a friend, if you conceal the reflections that may be cast upon my conduct. My own situation feels so irksome to me at times, that if I did not consult the public good more than my own tranquillity, I should long ere this have put every thing to the cast of a die. So far from my having an army of 20,000 men, well armed, &c., I have been here with less than one-half of it, including sick, furloughed, and on command; and those neither armed nor clothed as they should be. In short, my situation has been such that I have been obliged to use art to conceal it from my own officers.

The Congress, as you observe, expect, I believe, that I should do more than others,—for whilst they compel me to enlist men without a bounty, they give forty dollars to others, which will, I expect, put a stand to our enlistments; for notwithstanding all the public virtue which is ascribed to these people, there is no nation under the sun, (that I ever came across,) pay greater adoration to money than they do.

I am pleased to find that your battalions are clothed and look well, and that they are filing off for Canada. I wish I could say that the troops here had altered much in dress or appearance. Our regiments are little more

than half complete, and recruiting nearly at a stand. In all my letters, I fail not the mention of tents, and now perceive that notice is taken of your application. I have been convinced, by General Howe's conduct, that he has either been very ignorant of our situation, (which I do not believe) or that he has received positive orders (which I think is natural to conclude) not to put anything to the hazard till his reinforcements arrive:—otherwise there has been a time since the first of December, that we must have fought like men to have maintained these lines, so great in their extent. The party to Bunker's Hill had some good and some bad men engaged in it. One or two courts have been held on the conduct of part of it:—to be plain, these people among friends are not to be depended upon, if exposed: and any man will fight well, if he thinks himself in no danger. I do not apply this to these people only; I suppose it to be the case with all raw and undisciplined troops.

You may rely upon it, that transports left Boston six weeks ago with troops: where they are gone to, (unless observe to the West Indies,) I know not. You may also rely upon General Clinton's sailing from Boston about three weeks ago, with about four or five hundred men—his destination I am also a stranger to. I am sorry to hear of the failures you speak of from France; but why will not Congress forward part of the powder made in your province? They seem to look upon this as the season for action, but will not furnish the means. But I will not blame them. I dare say the demands upon them are greater than they can supply. The cause must be starved till our resources are greater, or more certain within ourselves.

With respect to myself, I have never entertained an idea of an accommodation since I heard of the measures which were adopted in consequence of the Bunker's Hill fight. The king's speech has confirmed the sentiments I entertained upon the news of that affair,—and if every man was of my mind, the ministers of G. B. should know in a few words upon what issue the cause should be put. I would not be deceived by artful declarations or specious pretences; nor would I be amused by unmeaning propositions: but in open, undisguised, and manly terms, proclaim our wrongs, and our resolutions to be redressed. I would tell them that we had borne much—that we had long and ardently sought for reconciliation upon honourable terms—that it had been denied us—that all our attempts after peace had proved abortive, and had been grossly misrepresented—that we had done everything that could be expected from the best of subjects—that the spirit of freedom beat too high in us to submit to slavery—and that if nothing else would satisfy a tyrant and his diabolical ministry, we were determined to shake off all connexions with a state so unjust and unnatural. This I would tell them, not under cover, but in words as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness.

I observe what you say in respect to the ardour of chimney-corner heroes. I am glad their zeal is in some measure abated, because if circumstances will not permit us to make an attempt upon B., or if it should be made and

fail, we shall not appear altogether so culpable. I entertain the same opinion of the attempt now which I have ever done. I believe an assault will be attended with considerable loss; and I believe it would succeed, if the men should behave well; without it, unless there is equal bad behaviour on the other side, we cannot. As to an attack upon B—— Hill, (unless it could be carried by surprise,) the loss I conceive would be greater in proportion than at Boston; and if a defeat should follow, would be discouraging to the men, but highly animating if crowned with success. Great good or great evil would consequently result from it,—it is quite a different thing to what you left, being by odds the strongest fortress they possess, both in rear and front.

The Congress having ordered all captures to be tried in the Courts of Admiralty of the different governments to which they are sent, and some irreconcilable difference arising between the resolves and Congress, and the law of this Colony respecting the proceedings or something or another which always happens to procrastinate business here, has put a total stop to the trials, to the no small injury of the public as well as great grievance of individuals: whenever a condemnation takes place I shall not be unmindful of your advice respecting the hulls, &c. Would to Heaven the plan you speak of for obtaining arms may succeed,—the acquisition would be great, and give fresh life and vigour to our measures, as would the arrival you speak of; our expectations are kept alive, and if we can keep ourselves so, and spirits up another summer, I have no fears of wanting the needful after that.

As the number of our enlisted men were too small to undertake any offensive operation, if the circumstances of weather, &c. should favour, I ordered in (by application to this government, Connecticut and New Hampshire) as many regiments of militia as would enable us to attempt something in some manner or other:—they were to have been here by the first of the month, but only a few straggling companies have yet come in. The Bay towards Roxbury has been froze up once or twice pretty hard, and yesterday, single persons might have crossed I believe from Letchmore's Point, by picking their way:—a thaw, I fear, is again approaching. We have had the most laborious piece of work at Letchmore's Point, on account of the frost, that ever you saw. We hope to get it finished on Sunday. It is within as commanding a distance of Boston as Dorchester Hill, though of a different part. Our vessels now and then pick up a prize or two. Our Commodore (Manly) was very near being caught about eight days ago, but happily escaped with vessels and crew, after running ashore, scuttling and defending her. I recollect nothing else worth giving you the trouble of, unless you can be amused by reading a letter and poem addressed to me by Mrs. or Miss Phillis Wheatley. In searching over a parcel of papers the other day, in order to destroy such as were useless, I brought it to light again:—at first with a view of doing justice to her great poetical genius, I had a great mind to publish the poem, but not knowing whether it might not be considered rather as a mark of my own vanity than as a compliment to her, I laid it

aside, till I came across it again in the manner just mentioned. I congratulate you on your election, although I consider it the coup de grace to my expectation of our seeing you resident in this camp again.* I have only to regret the want of you, if that should be the case, and I shall do it more feelingly as I have experienced the good effects of your aid. I am, with Mrs. Washington's compliments to Mrs. Reed, and my best respects added, dear sir,

Your most obedient and affectionate humble servant,
GEORGE WASHINGTON.

COLONEL MOYLAN TO MR. REED.

Camp, January 30, 1776.

If we had powder I do believe that Boston would fall into our hands. I hope soon to see some of the produce of the saltpetre make its appearance. I shan't be surprised at any thing, when the speech of our greatest foe can be thought worthy of a debate. Shall we never leave off debating and *boldly declare independence?* That and that only will make us act with spirit and vigour. The bulk of the people will not be against it, but the few and timid always will; but what can be expected from a contrary conduct? Can it be supposed possible that a reconciliation will take place after the loss of blood, cities, and treasure already suffered; but the war must come to every man's home before he will think of his neighbour's losses.

The following letter on the same subject, and in very much the same tone, is too characteristic of the wayward author to be omitted in a memoir of the times.

GENERAL CHARLES LEE TO MR. REED.

New York, February 28th, 1776.

MY DEAR REED,—

You have given me leave to be as silent as I please, but it is a license I shall not avail myself of, for whenever I can steal a moment, you may depend upon hearing from me. Indeed there is a probability that my business will be so incessant and complicated that I shall not be able to converse with you as often as I could wish, but I shall nevertheless confide that you will continue in your charitable design of writing every opportunity; nothing can (be assured) give me greater pleasure. Let your letters be folios.

What do the Congress intend to do with New York when I leave it. The two Connecticut regiments, which constitute our principal force, are only en-

* Mr. Reed, as will be seen, was elected to the Assembly at this time.

gaged till the 12th of March. The men-of-war will then return to their old station at the wharves. The Provincial Congress and the inhabitants will revert to their former principles and timidity, and the first troops who arrive from England will take quiet possession of the place. I tremble for the event, as I see no steps taken to prevent it.—The Tories on Long Island are set at liberty, on giving bonds for their good behaviour, which bonds will undoubtedly be prodigiously obligatory, when a few regiments and ships of war appear to assist and encourage them to act up to the loyal principles they have professed. This measure must and ought to be considered an act of absolute idiotism, as reconciliation and reunion with Great Britain is now as much of a chimera as incorporation with the people of Tibet. Why are not the ports declared free and open? We should then be regularly supplied with all the necessities of war. Without this regular supply, I do not see how we can carry on the war. The want of arms, clothing, tents, &c., will throw us into inconceivable distress. This instant a treaty ought to be entered into with France. We can now, when our affairs have the appearance of being prosperous, enter into treaties with safety, grace, and dignity, but should we wait a reverse of fortune, we must solicit protection—we must whine in the tone of our abject British ancestors. The groans of the Americans, policy and humanity dictate the necessity of the measure; for the very report of such an alliance would so terrify the tyrant and his fiendlike ministers, that they would sheath the sword, and consequently, the effusion of blood which must otherwise be shed, would be prevented. But I shall run on all night. You stand in no need of conviction, so I shall cease preaching.

I have pulled down the interior of the Fort, lest it should be converted into a citadel by Mr. Tryon and his myrmidons. The Tories are d—d mad. The Whigs are pleased of course. Adieu, my dear Reed, let me hear from you frequently.

I am eternally yours,
CHARLES LEE.

My respects to the wife of your bosom.

In the action of the Assembly at the commencement of its winter session, Mr. Reed had no share. He was not a member, and, so far as we can infer his position from such of his letters as have been preserved, and from the high marks of confidence reposed in him by the popular party, was opposed to the faltering and perplexed course pursued by the Assembly. On the 12th November, 1775, Thomas (then Major) Mifflin, who had been chosen at the previous general election, resigned, and at a special election held on the 26th January, 1776, Mr. Reed, then chairman of the Committee of Safety, was elected. On the 16th of February he took his seat. His colleague from

the city was Doctor Franklin, who on the 27th resigned on account of the infirmities of age, and was succeeded by Mr. Rittenhouse. The number of representatives was forty-one, and the relative strength of parties such as to give a decided control to those who for different reasons favoured the continuance of the charter form of government. On the 21st of February, Mr. Reed, by special order, was added to the Committee on Grievances, and, as appears from the Journal, was a member of all the prominent committees which were appointed, until he relinquished his seat, and rejoined General Washington at New York in June.

The discontent at the uncertain course of the Assembly, seemed gradually to increase; and by the end of February the plan of a Provincial Conference, to be chosen by the local committees, and with a view ultimately to a new frame of government under the authority of a popular convention, seems to have been matured. Of this, at the time, Mr. Reed strongly disapproved, and he appears to have applied himself earnestly to obviate the necessity or pretext for precipitate action by procuring the redress of the two great grievances of which the popular party complained—the non-revision of the articles of association, and the inadequacy of representation in the Assembly. Remonstrances on both subjects crowded on the Legislature, and day after day was consumed in earnest debate on the course to be pursued. In these debates, Mr. Reed had a distinguished part. Such was the probable success of the efforts thus made, that on the 4th of March, the Philadelphia Committee met and rescinded their first resolution in favour of a convention.

Mr. Reed seems to have contemplated the performance only of a special duty in the Assembly, and to have intended, on its success, if the war continued, to return to camp, for in answer to Washington's letter of the 10th of February, on hearing of his election, and despairing of his return, on the 3d of March he wrote from Philadelphia :—

REED TO WASHINGTON.*

Philadelphia, March 3d, 1776.

MY DEAR GENERAL,—

I have not been favoured with anything from you since my two last; but that never makes any difference in my writing, as your claims of friendship and gratitude are superior to all others. The Congress have made an appointment of generals as by the enclosed paper. Armstrong is ordered to South Carolina, Thompson to New York. The others keep their present situations. General Lee's destination is changed to Virginia, from an undoubted authority that it will be a principal scene of action.

The Congress have acceded to the proposition respecting myself, so that unless some new event, unforeseen and very important, should happen, I shall be with you this summer.† I must beg your indulgence till I can get my family into some convenient situation and settle my affairs. In the mean time I am forwarding your camp equipage, which I have extended in many small particulars beyond your order.

Arnold is to be entrusted with the affairs of Canada, Wooster having either resigned or been superseded, I know not which. Melcher is come from Quebec in twelve days, where he left our little army, now strengthened to fifteen hundred men, in good spirits, and still pleasing themselves with the hopes of being masters of the town. I have not yet seen him, so that I can give you no further particulars; but I understand they are like to want battering cannons and mortars. No arrival of powder or arms, since my last, or any account of our fleet, though from their present cruising ground we hope they will fall in with Lord Cornwallis and the transports.

Notwithstanding the act of Parliament for seizing our property, and a thousand other proofs of a bitter and irreconcilable spirit, there is a strange reluctance in the minds of many to cut the knot which ties us to Great Britain, particularly in this colony and to the southward. Though no man of understanding expects any good from the commissioners, yet they are for waiting to hear their proposals before they declare off. Yesterday, however, I was informed letters had been sent to France, to know what encouragement we might expect from that quarter.‡ Our coast is yet clear; it is a

* This is the first of Mr. Reed's letters to Washington that has been preserved.

† By a resolution of March 1st, 1776, the pay of the secretary of the Commander-in-chief was raised "on account of the extraordinary services at present attending that office, by reason of the General's direction of the naval department." (*Journals*, p. 80.)

‡ Silas Deane's letter of instructions from the Committee of Secret Correspondence is dated 3d March, '76. The committee were Franklin, Dickinson, and

golden opportunity to make provision for the war, which I hope will not be lost. If the other Provinces had done any thing like this, in the making of arms, this winter we should have been tolerably provided. We shall by the 1st of April have made four thousand stand since last October; every part done here. We are casting cannon; and there is more saltpetre made here than in all the Provinces put together. Six powder-mills are erecting in different parts. The two near this city deliver twenty-five hundred pounds per week, and are now in very good order. Many attempts have been made to get a bounty for the New England troops, but without effect. The Congress are resolved you shall abandon the lines and give up their country to be ravaged, if they will not defend it upon the same terms as those enlisted here, (such as march to Canada only excepted.) The Assembly have it under consideration to raise two thousand men for the defence of this Province, but I doubt its taking. Perhaps there may be half the number. I am told we can easily raise two or three more battalions, if we had arms, &c., for them.

I do not think I shall bring any one with me when I come. Mr. Webb has long had an inclination to be in your family. If the post should be agreeable to him and he be agreeable to you, I believe I should prefer him to any other.* The post is just going, so that I have only time to add that I am, dear sir, yours most affectionately, &c.†

Morris from Pennsylvania, Jay, and Harrison. "Acquaint M. de Vergennes," say the committee, "that France has been pitched on for the first application, from an opinion *that if we should, as there is a great appearance we shall, come to a total separation from Great Britain, France would be looked upon as the power whose friendship it would be fittest for us to cultivate.*" *Sparks's Dip. Corr.* vol. i. pp. 6, 7.

* Probably Samuel B. Webb, who afterwards at New York was appointed an aid of the Commander-in-chief. Colonel Webb was a gallant and most distinguished officer.

† In a letter of the same date to Mr. Pettit, from which an extract has already been made, Mr Reed says: "I look upon separation from the Mother Country as a certain event, though we are not yet so familiarized to the idea as thoroughly to approve it. Some talk of the Commissioners, but so faintly, that it is easy to see they do not expect any benefit, safety, or honour from the negotiation. The Congress have acceded to every proposition the General has made as to myself, so that I expect to set out for camp as soon as I have removed my family either to Burlington or Haddonfield, and the session of the Assembly is over. The Congress are paving the way to a Declaration of Independence, but I believe will not make it until the minds of the people are better prepared for it than as yet they are."

REED TO WASHINGTON.

Philadelphia, March 7th, 1776.

MY DEAR GENERAL,—

I have now the pleasure of informing you, that a vessel, long expected from France and Holland, arrived a few days ago, with twenty-five tons of powder, three hundred stand of excellent arms, and fifteen hundred weight of saltpetre. We are hourly in expectation of further arrivals; but we must now soon expect some ships of war in our river, which I fear will cut off all further enterprises of the like nature. We have accounts from Virginia, that Clinton was arrived at Hampton, but seemed to be waiting for his reinforcements. Nothing further new, therefore, from that quarter. We have not heard a syllable from our fleet for a considerable time, but expect intelligence every hour. Upon the arrival of the act of Parliament authorizing the ships of war to seize all American vessels, and condemn them as lawful prize, application was made to Congress by several persons for letters of marque and reprisal; but they could not feel bold enough, though many of the most timid, and those who have hankered so much after reconciliation, seeing so little of a spirit of that kind in Great Britain, have come off very much from their sentiments, the result of old prejudices and new fears. I have taken a house in the country, to which I propose soon to remove my family, and am preparing what is necessary for the summer. But an affair of great importance in the Assembly will detain me some time, but I hope not long. We wait impatiently to hear from you, in consequence of the last accounts, if there was a probability of a movement from Boston. Adieu, my dear General!—should there be any action or enterprise, God grant it may be a glorious one to you, and a happy one for our country.

On the next day “the important measure” was decided, and the Assembly resolved to admit seventeen new representatives. Reed and Dickinson were put on the committee to perfect the measure. This triumph was peculiarly grateful, as but two days before the patriots in that body had been enabled only by the casting vote of the Speaker, parties being so equally balanced, to direct a new enlistment of troops till January, 1778. On the 11th, the committee reported their bill for new representatives:—on the 14th it was passed by a vote of 21 to 9; and on the next day received the assent of the Governor.

On the 26th of February, Washington writes one of his most confidential and characteristic letters:

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Cambridge, February 26th, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—

A line or two from you by Colonel Bull, which came to hand last evening, is the only letter I have received from you since the 21st January—this, added to my getting none from any other correspondent southward, leads me to apprehend some miscarriage. I am to observe, though, that the Saturday's post is not yet arrived,—by that I may possibly get letters. We have, under as many difficulties, perhaps, (on account of hard frozen ground,) as ever working parties engaged, completed our work on Letchmore's Point; we have got some heavy pieces of ordinance placed there, two platforms fixed for mortars, and everything but *the* thing ready for any offensive operation. Strong guards are now mounted there, and at Cobble Hill. About ten days ago, the severe freezing weather formed some pretty strong ice from Dorchester to Boston Neck, and from Roxbury to the Common. This I thought (knowing the ice could not last) a favourable opportunity to make an assault upon the troops in town. I proposed it in council; but, behold! though we had been waiting all the year for this favourable event, the enterprise was thought too dangerous! Perhaps it was—perhaps the irksomeness of my situation led me to undertake more than could be warranted by prudence. I did not think so, and am sure yet that the enterprise, if it had been undertaken with resolution, must have succeeded; without it any would fail: but it is now at an end, and I am preparing to take post on Dorchester, to try if the enemy will be so kind as to come out to us. Ten regiments of militia, you must know, had come in to strengthen my hands for offensive measures; but what I have here said respecting the determinations in council, and possessing of Dorchester Point, is spoken under the rose.

March 3d, 1776.

The foregoing was intended for another conveyance, but being hurried with some other matters, and not able to complete it, it was delayed; since which your favours of the 28th January, and 1st and 8th of February, are come to hand. For the agreeable account contained in one of them of your progress in the manufacture of powder, and prospect of getting arms, I am obliged to you, as there is some consolation in knowing that these useful articles will supply the wants of some part of the Continental troops, although I feel too sensibly the mortification of having them withheld from me—Congress not even thinking it necessary to take the least notice of my application for these things.

I hope in a few nights to be in readiness to take post on Dorchester, as we are using every means in our power to provide materials for this purpose, the ground being so hard froze yet, that we cannot intrench, and

therefore are obliged to depend entirely upon chandaliars, fascines, and screwed hay for our redoubts. It is expected that this work will bring on an action between the King's troops and ours.

General Lee's expedition to New York was founded upon indubitable evidence of General Clinton's being on the point of sailing—no place so likely for his destination as New York, nor no place where a more capital blow could be given to the interests of America than there. Common prudence, therefore, dictated the necessity of preventing an evil which might have proved irremediable, had it happened, but I confess to you honestly, I had no idea of running the Continent to the expense which was incurred, or that such a body of troops would go from Connecticut as did, or be raised upon the terms they were. You must know, my good sir, that a Capt. Sears was here, with some other gentlemen of Connecticut, when the intelligence of Clinton's embarkation, (at least the embarkation of the troops,) came to hand. The situation of these lines would not afford a detachment—New York could not be depended upon,—and of the troops in Jersey we had no certain information, either of their numbers or destination. What then was to be done? Why, Sears and these other gentlemen assured me, that if the necessity of the case was signified by me, and that General Lee should be sent, one thousand volunteers (requiring no pay, but supplied with provisions only,) would march immediately to New York, and defend the place till Congress could determine what should be done, and that a line from me to Governor Trumbull to obtain his sanction, would facilitate the measure. This I accordingly wrote, in precise terms, intending that these volunteers, and such of the Jersey regiments as could be speedily assembled, should be thrown into the city for its defence, and for disarming the Tories on Long Island, who, I understood, had become extremely insolent and daring, when behold! instead of volunteers consisting of gentlemen without pay, the Governor directed men to be voluntarily enlisted for this service upon Continental pay and allowance. This, you will observe, was contrary to my expectation and plan. Yet as I thought it a matter of the last importance to secure the command of the North River, I did not think it expedient to countermand the raising of the Continental regiments on account of the pay; if I have done wrong, those members of Congress who think the matter ought to have been left to them, must consider my proceedings as an error of judgment, and that a measure is not always to be judged of by the event. It is moreover worthy of consideration, that in cases of extreme necessity (as the present) nothing but decision can insure success, and certain I am that Clinton had something more in view by peeping into New York than to gratify his curiosity, or make a friendly visit to his friend Mr. Tryon,—however, I am not fond of stretching my powers: and if the Congress will say, "thus far and no farther you shall go," I will promise not to offend whilst I continue in their service. I observe what you say in respect to my wagon, &c. I wanted nothing more than a light travelling wagon (such as

those of New Jersey) with a secure cover which might be under lock and key, the hinges being on one side, the lock on the other. I have no copy of the memorandum of the articles I desired you to provide for me, but think one and a half dozen of camp-stools, a folding table, rather two, plates and dishes, were among them; what I meant, therefore, was that the bed of this wagon should be constructed in such a manner as to stow these things to the best advantage. If you cannot get them with you, I shall despair of providing them here, as workmen are scarce, and most exorbitantly high in their charges. What I should aim at is, when the wagon and things are ready (which ought to be very soon, as I do not know how soon we may beat a march) to buy a pair of clever horses, same colour, hire a careful driver, and let the whole come off at once, and then they are ready for immediate service. I have no doubt but that the Treasury, by application to Mr. Hancock, will direct payment thereof without any kind of difficulty, as Congress must be sensible that I cannot take the field without equipage, and after I have once got into a tent, I shall not soon quit it.

March 7th.

The rumpus which every body expected to see between the Ministerialists in Boston and our troops, has detained the bearer till this time. On Monday night I took possession of the Heights of Dorchester with two thousand men under the command of General Thomas. Previous to this, and in order to divert the enemy's attention from the real object, and to harass, we began on Saturday night a cannonade and bombardment, which with intervals was continued through the night—the same on Sunday, and on Monday, a continued roar from seven o'clock till daylight was kept up between the enemy and us. In this time we had an officer and one private killed, and four or five wounded; and through the ignorance, I suppose, of our artillery-men, burst five mortars (two thirteen inch and three ten inch), the "Congress" one of them. What damage the enemy has sustained is not known, as there has not been a creature out of Boston since. The cannonade, &c., except in the destruction of the mortars, answered our expectations fully; for though we had upwards of 300 teams in motion at the same instant, carrying on our fascines and other materials to the Neck, and the moon shining in its full lustre, we were not discovered till daylight on Tuesday morning.

So soon as we were discovered every thing seemed to be preparing for an attack, but the tide failing before they were ready, about one thousand only were able to embark in six transports in the afternoon, and these falling down towards the Castle, were drove on shore by a violent storm, which arose in the afternoon of that day, and continued through the night; since that they have been seen returning to Boston, and whether from an appre-

hension that our works are now too formidable to make any impression on, or from what other causes I know not, but their hostile appearances have subsided, and they are removing their ammunition out of their magazine, whether with a view to move bag and baggage or not I cannot undertake to say, but if we had powder (and our mortars replaced, which I am about to do by new cast ones as soon as possible) I would, so soon as we were sufficiently strengthened on the heights to take possession of the point just opposite to Boston Neck, give them a dose they would not well like.

We had prepared boats, a detachment of 4000 men, &c., &c., for pushing to the west part of Boston, if they had made any formidable attack upon Dorchester. I will not lament or repine at any act of Providence because I am in a great measure, a convert to Mr. Pope's opinion, that whatever is, is right, but I think every thing had the appearance of a successful issue, if we had come to an engagement on that day. It was the 5th of March, which I recalled to their remembrance as a day never to be forgotten: an engagement was fully expected, and I never saw spirits higher, or more ardour prevailing.*

Your favour of the 18th ulto. came to my hands by post last night, and gives me much pleasure, as I am led to hope I shall see you of my family again: the terms upon which you come will be perfectly agreeable to me, and I should think you neither candid nor friendly if your communications on this subject had not been free, unreserved, and divested of that false kind of modesty which too often prevents the elucidation of points important to be known.

Mr. Baylor, seeming to have an inclination to go into the artillery, and Col. Knox desirous of it, I have appointed Mr. Moylan and Mr. Palfrey my aides-de-camp, so that I shall, if you come, have a good many writers about me. I think my countrymen made a capital mistake when they took Henry out of the Senate to place him in the field, and pity it is he does not see this, and remove every difficulty by a voluntary resignation.† I am of opinion that Colonel Armstrong (if he retains his health, spirits, and vigour), will be as fit a person as any they could send to Virginia, as he is senior officer to any now there, and I should think could give no offence;—but to place Colonel Thompson there in the first command, would throw every thing into the utmost confusion, for it was by mere chance he became a colonel upon this expedition, and by greater chance he became first colonel, in this army; to take him then from another colony, place him over the heads of several gentlemen under, or with whom, he has served in a low and subordinate character, would never answer any other purpose but that of introducing endless confusion,—such a thing surely cannot be in contemplation, and knowing the mischiefs it would produce, surely Colonel Thomp-

* On the 5th of March, 1770, the British troops had fired on the citizens of Boston.

† See Wirt's Life of Patrick Henry, section vi.

son would have more sense, and a greater regard for the cause he is engaged in, than to accept of it : unless some uncommon abilities or exertions had given him a superior claim. He must know that nothing more than being a captain of horse in the year 1759, (I think it was), did very extraordinarily give him the start he now has, when the rank was settled here:—at the same time he must know another fact, that several officers now in the Virginia service, were much his superiors in point of rank, and will not, I am sure, serve under him. He stands first colonel here, and may, I presume put in a very good and proper claim to the first brigade that falls vacant. But I hope more regard will be paid to the service than to send him to Virginia. The bringing Colonel Armstrong into this army as major-general, however great his merit, would introduce much confusion. Thomas, if no more, would surely quit, and I believe him to be a good man. If Thomas supplies the place of Lee, there will be a vacancy for either Armstrong or Thompson, for I have heard of no other valiant son of New England waiting promotion since the advancement of Fry, who has not, and I doubt will not do much service to the cause; at present he keeps his room, and talks learnedly of emetics, cathartics, &c. For my own part, I see nothing but a declining life that matters him. I am sorry to hear of your ill-fated fleet. We had it, I suppose because we wished it, that Hopkins had taken Clinton and his transports. How glorious would this have been! We have the proverb of our side, however, that a bad beginning will end well;—this applies to land and sea service. The account given of the business of the Commissioners from England seems to be of a piece with Lord North's conciliatory motion of last year, built upon the same foundation, and if true that they are to be divided among the Colonies to offer terms of pardon, is as insulting as that motion, and only assigned, after stopping all intercourse with us, to set us to view Great Britain as a people that will not hearken to any proposition of peace. Was there ever any thing more absurd than to repeal the very acts which have introduced all this confusion and bloodshed, and at the same time enact a law to restrain all intercourse with the Colonies for opposing them! The drift and design are obvious; but is it possible that any sensible—but enough, or else upon a subject so copious I should enter upon my fifth sheet of paper. I have, if length of letter will do it, already made you ample amends for the silence which my hurry in preparing for what I hoped would be a decisive stroke obliged me to keep. My best respects to Mrs. Reed, in which Mrs. Washington joins, concludes me, dear sir,

Your most obedient affectionate servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S. March 9th, Colonel Bull's still waiting to see a little further into the event of things, gives me an opportunity of adding, that from a gentleman out of Boston, confirmed by a paper from the selectmen there, we have undoubted information of General Howe's preparing with great precipitancy to embark his troops: for what place we know not; Halifax, it is said. The

selectmen, being under dreadful apprehension for the town, applied to General Robertson to apply to General Howe, who through General Robertson has informed them that it is not his intention to destroy the town, unless his majesty's troops should be molested during their embarkation, or at their departure. This paper seems so much under covert, unauthenticated, and addressed to nobody, that I sent word to the selectmen, that I could take no notice of it ; but I shall go on with my preparations as intended. The gentlemen above mentioned, out of Boston, say that they seem to be in great consternation there, that one of our shot from Lamb's Dam disabled six men, in their beds, and that the Admiral, upon discovering our works next morning, informed the General that, unless we were dispossessed of them, he could not keep the King's ships in the harbour ; and that three thousand men, commanded by Lord Percy, were actually embarked for that purpose. Of the issue of it you have been informed before. I am, &c.

G. W.

On the 15th, Mr. Reed writes :—

MY DEAR GENERAL,—

This morning the express arrived, with an account of the interesting events which have taken place since the month began. I beg leave to congratulate you on events so favourable to the interests of our country and your own character ; — not that in my opinion it was the least clouded by your inactivity, as the causes were well known, but it is certain that enterprise and success give a brilliance and lustre which cannot be unacceptable to a good mind. We shall be very anxious for further accounts, as these have left you at a critical period of suspense ; when we are led to expect some very important change may soon happen. I shall be careful of your confidential account of your council of war. I wish the event may prove me mistaken, but I am strongly possessed with an idea that some members of your council never will concur in any measure which leads to danger ; and I think you will make less and less use of them in that way every day you are with them. Thomas, I presume you know, is made a Major-General, and ordered to Canada, where old Wooster was throwing every thing into confusion, and a superior officer was necessary to keep the peace. I do not much like their thus taking away the men in whom you can most trust ; but your camp is considered a school, and I fear the service will require all their separated attention and ability. I wrote you before, that General Lee was ordered to Virginia, Armstrong to South Carolina, Thompson to New York. We have every thing to fear from the southward. A cursed spirit of disaffection has appeared in the back parts of North and South Carolina, which, if not subdued before the forces arrive from England, will prove a most formidable piece of business, especially when connected with the hosts of negroes in the lower part of the country. Instead of painting their strength and power

of resistance in ostentatious terms, as is the fashion of some folks, the gentlemen of that country acknowledge their weakness, and dread the consequences. I am really concerned for old Armstrong. I think the climate will destroy him.*

You have had much reason to think that Congress neglect your camp in the article of ammunition, but I hope by the time this reaches you, ten tons of our last importation will be in your camp. The vessel brought but three hundred stand of arms, but they are the best yet imported. If Howe should leave Boston, we expect he will make for New York. We look upon that as one of the scenes of the summer business. In the former case, I find it supposed you will move southward. By General Lee's account, no dependence is to be put on their professions; and the late Delegation from Congress came back with a very slender opinion of their conduct, which is timid and trimming to the greatest degree. I am glad you have informed me how the matter stood with the Connecticut men; I had no doubt but the step you took was founded upon necessity, which would justify the directing troops to be raised, but I found it gave an alarm to some folks, and I believe I hinted it in a former letter. But your statement must, and I doubt not has given perfect satisfaction. I have thought it a duty I owe you to mention any thing of this kind occurring, as your distance might otherwise prevent a suitable explanation.

Most of your camp equipage will be completed this week, or the beginning of next. I shall obey your commands with respect to the wagon and horses. There will be no difficulty about the money, should the Treasurer here have any scruples, as I shall advance it, and we can settle that when we meet. I had ordered the tables, and several other things, which appeared to me to be necessary, though not in your order. I hope when you see them they will prove agreeable. I have consulted economy as much as I thought consistent with your rank and station. Most of our workmen are such strangers to these things, that they are very slow and tedious. Two of the tents are finished, and the other just completed. I am never happier than when I am on your business, so that you may depend upon it that I shall spare no pains to have them done in the best manner, and forwarded with the greatest expedition. The destruction of the mortars is very extraordinary; there certainly must be some want of skill in the management of them.

I suppose "Old Put" was to command the detachment intended for Boston on the 5th instant, as I do not know any officer but himself who could have been depended on for so hazardous a service. Should Howe decamp, I cannot say I should much regret that day's passing over so quietly, as if the troops had behaved well, there would have been a great loss, and if ill, it would have ruined your whole plan.

* General Armstrong, though far advanced in years, served with great distinction throughout the War, and was one of Mr. Reed's truest and most faithful friends.

We have some accounts from Virginia that Colonel Henry has resigned in disgust at not being made a general officer, but it rather gives satisfaction than otherwise, as his abilities seem better calculated for the Senate than the field. We have no very late accounts from thence. A man-of-war and some tenders lately went up to Baltimore, and gave them an alarm which drove all their women, children, and valuable effects out of town; but we have heard nothing since. Poor Fry! heaven and earth were moved to get him in, now I suppose we shall hear no more of him. Not a syllable yet from our fleet; it is four weeks to-morrow since they left our capes. Should they fall in with the twelve men-of-war convoying the transports to Virginia, it is all over with them, and we think there is very great danger of it. My next must certainly give some intelligence. Now for our own news.

The packet arrived last week at New York, and in her came passenger Mr. Robert Temple, (owner of the late beautiful farm,) below our lines; he came to town last night. The report is that in papers under his buttons he has brought a letter from Arthur Lee, advising that the commissioners were coming out, instructed to settle the dispute; to get from us as much as they can; but if peace cannot be had on their terms, to make it on ours. I mention it to you as a report, for to me it seems so inconsistent with all that we have seen and heard, that I do not believe a word of it. I shall get more certain intelligence soon of his business, and it shall make a part of my next letter. We every moment expect to hear of these gentry's arrival; they are, if possible, to treat with the Assemblies, but if that cannot be obtained, then with Congress. A little time will show what we are to expect from this new project. For my part I can see nothing to be hoped from it; but it has laid fast hold of some here, and made its impression on the Congress. It is said the Virginians are so alarmed with the idea of independence, that they have sent Mr. Braxton on purpose to turn the vote of that Colony, if any question on that subject should come before Congress. To tell the truth, my dear sir, I am infinitely more afraid of these commissioners, than their generals and armies. If their propositions are plausible, and behaviour artful, I am apprehensive they will divide us. There is so much suspicion in Congress, and so much party on this subject, that very little more fuel is required to kindle the flame. It is high time for the Colonies to begin a gradual change of delegates. Private pique, prejudice, and suspicion, will make its way into the breasts of even good men, sitting long in such a council as ours; and whenever that is the case, their deliberation will be disturbed, and the public interest of course suffer. We have made a very great change in the councils of the province, and I hope a favourable one for the common cause. Having introduced seventeen new members at once into the House of Assembly, the increase of representation is in those parts of the province where the spirit of liberty most prevails and of consequence our measures will partake of it.

We have had a vessel-load of linens on account of Congress, arrived within

these few days past ; but I do not hear a word of tents. What our army is expected to do without them I cannot conceive. Lord Stirling has stopped some of our troops bound to Canada, as it is not possible to keep the Connecticut people beyond their own time. General Lee with great difficulty induced some of them to prolong their stay two weeks, which I believe was more than could be done with you.

Mr. Deane of Connecticut is gone to Europe. His errand may be guessed, though little is said about it. The French vessels begin to find their way to our ports, two or three having come in this spring ; but their cargoes are chiefly West India goods—a little, very little powder merely as a cover.

Since writing the above, I have conversed with some gentlemen who have seen Mr. Temple. I find he only brings two letters wrote by Dr. Lee to himself, and that his information of the powers of the commissioners, is not built on any certain authority, but rather his own conjectures. He says the ministry are resolved on peace, if to be had ; they are willing to treat with Congress ; but the King would not hear of it. The difficulty of recruiting is very great in England, Scotland, and Ireland—scarce a man more to be had on any terms. I send you a morning paper containing the current news. My respectful compliments with Mrs. Reed's to Mrs. Washington, and am, dear sir, most sincerely and affectionately yours.

REED TO WASHINGTON.

Philadelphia, March 23, 1776.

MY DEAR GENERAL,—

The great changes which have taken place with you, will, I doubt, scarcely leave you time to read a letter, but as it conveys a piece of good news, I will venture to interrupt you for a few moments. I dare say you have heard how troublesome, and dangerous the back inhabitants of North Carolina were growing. General Gage sent some Scotch officers there last summer, who pretending a disgust to the ministerial service, went among their countrymen there and fomented a spirit of disaffection ; and when they thought matters sufficiently ripened, they headed a large body of men, and were marching down to meet the governor. However, they were met by Colonel Caswell, and totally defeated—above thirty left dead on the spot, a great number of prisoners taken, and their commander a Mr. M'Donald. The whole party is said to be so crushed, and disappointed, that nothing more is to be apprehended from them.

We have no news from Virginia since I wrote you last ; no account yet of our fleet,—and as no member of Congress expresses any concern on the subject, we begin to suspect they are gone upon some distant enterprise :—some conjecture to lay in the way of the East India ships, a few of which would soon reimburse us the expenses of the war. However, it is all supposition.

It has happened as I expected, that many who were impatient to have Howe drawn from Boston, are now alarmed with the apprehension of the seat of war being removed to the Middle Colonies. General Lee is gone off to Virginia, and we hope will be there in time to meet the troops expected from England. The Congress have at length granted letters of marque, but there is such a difficulty in procuring ammunition, that I imagine little use will be made of them, at least for some time. The Prussian general is made a brigadier,* and ordered to Canada. By some late accounts from England, we are led to expect that the scheme of sending commissioners will be wholly laid aside. If it should, I think we shall have no reason to regret it, as it does not seem calculated to produce any real benefit.

Adieu, my dear sir,—that health and honour may ever attend you, is the sincere wish of, my dear General,

Your most obedient and affectionate humble servant.

* The Baron de Woedke.

CHAPTER VIII.

1776.

Letters from Washington—Evacuation of Boston—Effect on Pennsylvania affairs—Mr. Reed's correspondence—Mr. Temple's arrival—Election for additional representatives in May, 1776—Naval action on the Delaware—Mr. Adams's resolution and preamble of 10th May—Town meeting—Defences of Philadelphia—Instructions of June, 1776, to delegates in Congress—Provincial conference, and dissolution of Charter Assembly—Constitution of 1776.

THE next mails brought exhilarating news—news which rendered unnecessary Mr. Reed's departure, and enabled him to continue his services in the Assembly. It may be imagined how much pleasure the following letters gave to one who but a few months before had been an eye-witness of the fearful odds with which the almost hopeless siege of Boston had been continued.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Cambridge, March 19th, 1776.

MY DEAR SIR,—

We have at length got the ministerial troops in this quarter on ship-board. Our possessing Dorchester Heights, as mentioned in my last, put them (after they had given over the design of attacking us) into a most violent hurry to embark, which was still further precipitated on Sunday morning by our breaking ground on Nukes' Hill, (the point nearest the town,) the night before. The whole fleet is now in Nantasket and King's Roads, waiting for I know not what, unless to give us a parting blow, for which I shall endeavour to be prepared.

The hurry in which they have embarked is inconceivable; they have not, from a rough estimate, left less than £30,000 worth of his majesty's property behind them, in provisions and stores, vessels, rugs, blankets, &c.: near thirty pieces of fine heavy cannon are left spiked, which we are now drill-

ing,—a mortar or two,—the H. shells, &c. in abundance,—all their artillery-carts, powder-wagons, &c., &c., which they have been twelve months about, are left with such abuse as their hurry would permit them to bestow; whilst others, after a little cutting and hacking, were thrown in the harbour, and now are visiting every shore. In short, you can scarce form an idea of the matter. Valuable vessels are left with only a mast or bowsprit cut down—some of them loaded;—their works all standing, upon examination of which, especially that at Bunker's Hill, we find amazingly strong: twenty thousand men could not have carried it against one thousand, had that work been well defended. The town of Boston was almost impregnable—every avenue fortified. I have already marched the riflemen and five regiments for New York; I cannot spare more, whilst the fleet hover in our harbour. So soon as they are fairly gone, more will follow with all expedition, as I shall do myself, as I suppose New York to be the object in view. I write you in much haste, and therefore can only add that I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient and affectionate servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

P. S. I impatiently wish to see you.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Cambridge, March 25th, 1776.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Since my last, things remain nearly in *statu quo*. The enemy have the best knack of puzzling people I ever met with in my life. They have blown up, burnt, and demolished the castle totally, and are now all in Nantasket Road—have been there ever since Wednesday,—what doing the Lord knows. Various are the conjectures: the Bostonians think their stay there absolutely necessary to fit them for sea, as the vessels neither in themselves nor loading, were in any degree fit for a voyage, being loaded in great haste and much disorder. This opinion is corroborated by a deserter from one of the transports, who says they have yards, booms, bowsprits, &c. yet to fix. Others again think that they have a mind to pass over the equinoctial gale before they put out, not being in the best condition to stand one—others that they are waiting reinforcements, (which I believe they have received, as I have had an account of the sailing of fifteen vessels from the West Indies, and that that number have been seen coming into the Road.) But my opinion of the matter is, that they want to retrieve their disgrace before they go off, and I think a favourable opportunity presents itself to them. They have now got their whole force into one collected body, and no posts to guard. We have detached six regiments to New York, have many points to look to, and on Monday next ten regiments of militia, which were brought in to serve till the 1st of April, stand disengaged. From former experience, we have found it equally practicable to

stop a torrent as these people, when their time is up; if this should be the case now, what more favourable opening can the enemy wish for, to make a rush upon our lines—nay, upon the back of our lines at Roxbury? as they can land two miles from them, and pass behind. I am under more apprehension from them now than ever, and am taking every precaution I can to guard against the evil; but we have a kind of people to deal with who will not fear danger till the bayonet is at their breast, and then are susceptible enough of it. I am fortifying Fort Hill in Boston, demolishing the lines on the Neck there, (as it is a defence against the country only,) and make such other dispositions as appear necessary for a general defence. I can spare no more men, till I see the enemy's back fairly turned, and then shall hasten to New York. You mention Mr. Webb in one of your letters as an assistant: he will be agreeable enough to me, if you think him qualified for the business. What kind of a hand he writes I know not; I believe but a cramped one—latterly none at all, as he has either the gout or rheumatism in both. He is a man fond of company, of gaiety,—and of a tender constitution; whether, therefore, such a person would answer your purpose so well as a plodding, methodical person, whose sole business should be to arrange his papers, &c. in such order as to produce any one at any instant it is called for, and capable, at the same time, of composing a letter, is what you have to consider. I can only add, that I have no one in view myself, and wish you success in your choice, being with great truth and sincerity,

Dear sir, your affectionate servant.

P. S. I have taken occasion to hint to a certain gentleman in this camp, without introducing names, my apprehensions of his being concerned in trade. He protests most solemnly that he is not, directly or indirectly, and derives no other profit than the Congress allows him for defraying the expenses, to wit, 5 per cent. on the goods purchased.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Cambridge, March 28th, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—

General Howe has a grand manœuvre in view, or has made an inglorious retreat. Yesterday evening the remains of the British fleet left Nantasket Road, and, (except an armed vessel or two,) hath left the coast quite clear of an enemy. Six more regiments will instantly march for New York, two days hence another, and a day or two after that our whole force, except about three or four regiments, to erect such works as shall be adjudged necessary for the security of this place. In three or four days from this date, I shall follow myself. In other words, the moment I can put things upon such a footing as the exigency of affairs may require, I shall depart. I have received your favour of the 15th inst., but hurried as you may well suppose

me to be, (in sending expresses to one and another,) upon this occasion, I shall only add that I am, with sincere regard and affection,

Dear sir, your most obedient servant.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Cambridge, April 1st, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—

By the express which I sent to Philadelphia a few days ago, I wrote you a few hasty lines; I have little time to do more now, as I am hurried in despatching one brigade after another for New York, and preparing for my own departure by pointing out the duties of those that remain behind me.

Nothing of importance has occurred in these parts, since my last, unless it be the resignations of Generals Ward and Fry, and the reassumption of the former, or retraction, on account as he says, of its being disagreeable to some of the officers. Who those officers are, I have not heard. I have not inquired. When the application to Congress and notice of it to me came to hand, I was disarmed of *interposition*, because it was put upon the footing of duty, or conscience, the General being persuaded that his *health* would not allow him to take that share of duty that his office required. The officers to whom the resignation is disagreeable, have been able, no doubt, to convince him of his mistake, and that his *health* will admit him to be *alert* and *active*. I shall leave him till he can determine yea or nay, to command in this quarter. General Fry, that wonderful man, has made a most wonderful hand of it. His appointment took place the 11th January; he desired ten days ago that his resignation might take place the 11th April. He has drawn three hundred and seventy-five dollars, never done one day's duty, scarce been three times out of his house, discovered that he was too old and too infirm for a moving camp, *but* remembers that he has been young, active, and very capable of doing what is now out of his power to accomplish; and therefore has left Congress to find out another man capable of making, if possible, a more brilliant figure than he has done; add to these the departure of Generals Lee and Thomas, taking some little account of S—— and H——, and then form an opinion of the G——ls of this army, their councils, &c.

Your letter of the 15th ult. contained a very unfavourable account of the Carolinas, but I am glad to find by the subsequent one of the 23d that the prospect brightens, and that Mr. Martin's first attempt, (through those universal instruments of tyranny, the Scotch,) hath met with its deserved success. The old proverb of the first blow being half the battle cannot better apply than in these instances, the spirits of the vanquished being depressed in proportion as the victors get elated.

I am glad to find my camp equipage in such forwardness; I shall expect to meet it, and I hope you, at New York, for which place I am preparing to

set out on Thursday or Friday next. The account brought by Mr. Temple of the favourable disposition in the ministry to accommodate matters does not correspond with their speeches in Parliament;—how then does he account for their inconsistency? If the commissioners do not come over with full and ample powers to treat with Congress, I sincerely wish they may never put their feet on American ground, as it must be self-evident, (in the other case,) that they come over with insidious intentions; to distract, divide, and create as much confusion as possible; how then can any man, let his passion for reconciliation be never so strong, be so blinded, and misled, as to embrace a measure evidently designed for his destruction? No man does, no man can wish the restoration of peace more fervently than I do, but I hope whenever made, it will be upon such terms as will reflect honour upon the councils and wisdom of America. With you, I think a change in the American representation necessary; frequent appeals to the people can be attended with no bad, but may have very salutary effects. My countrymen I know from their form of government, and steady attachment heretofore to royalty, will come reluctantly into the idea of independency, but time and persecution bring many wonderful things to pass; and by private letters which I have lately received from Virginia, I find "Common Sense" is working a wonderful change there in the minds of many men.

The four thousand men destined for Boston on the 5th, if the ministerialists had attempted our works on Dorchester, or the lines at Roxbury, were to have been headed by "Old Put." But he would have had pretty easy work of it, as his motions were to have been regulated by signals, and these signals from appearances. He was not to have made the attempt unless the town had been drained, or very considerably weakened of its force.

I believe I mentioned in my last to you, that all those who took upon themselves the style and title (in Boston) of government's men, have shipped themselves off in the same hurry, but under greater disadvantages than the King's (I think it idle to keep up the distinction of ministerial) troops have done, being obliged in a manner, to man their own vessels; seamen not being to be had for the King's transports, and submit to all the hardships that can be conceived. One or two of them have committed what it would have been happy for mankind if more of them had done, long ago: the act of suicide. By all accounts a more miserable set of beings does not exist than these; taught to believe that the power of Great Britain was almost omnipotent, and if it was not, that foreign aid was at hand, they were higher and more insulting in their opposition than the regulars themselves. When the order issued therefore for embarking the troops in Boston, no electric shock, no sudden flash of lightning, in a word, not even the last trump, could have struck them with greater consternation; they were at their wit's end, and conscious of their black ingratitude, chose to commit themselves in the manner before described, to the mercy of the winds and waves, in a tempestuous season, rather than meet their offended countrymen; and with

this declaration I am told they have done it, that if they could have thought that the most abject submission, would have procured peace for them, they would have humbled themselves in the dust, and kissed the rod that should be held out for chastisement. Unhappy wretches! Deluded mortals! Would it not be good policy to grant a generous amnesty, and conquer these people by a generous forgiveness? I am, with Mrs. Washington's compliments joined with my own to Mrs. Reed, dear sir,

Your sincere and affectionate friend and servant,
GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S. I have this instant received an express from Governor Cooke, informing me that a man-of-war is just arrived in the harbour at New Port, and that twenty-seven sail of vessels (supposed to be part of the fleet from Boston) are within Secenet Point. I have ordered General Sullivan's brigade which marched from hence on Friday afternoon, to file off immediately for Providence, and General Greene's, which was to begin its march to-day, to repair immediately to that place.

A new spirit was naturally infused into the Pennsylvania patriots, both in and out of the Assembly. The intelligence of the ignominious flight of an enemy so recently deemed invincible, gave new vigour to the movement party. A prize court was created, and a judge commissioned by the authority of the Assembly, and without the intervention of the governor, who could scarcely be expected to sanction such measures; means were taken to disarm and imprison the disaffected; large emissions of currency for the payment of the militia were made, and new and heavy fines were imposed on the non-associators.

MR. REED TO MR. PETTIT.

Philadelphia, March 30, 1776.

I this evening received your favour of the 25th inst. The late events at Boston, and general state of things, keep me in suspense on many accounts. I think with you, that Howe is gone to Halifax, and that there is little probability of his coming southward, at least till he has refreshed his troops. General Washington writes me that he shall come to New York as soon as he has settled matters upon a tolerable footing at Boston. Besides the general account given of the power of the commissioners, &c., in newspapers, I have a private letter from young Ingersoll* in England, wherein

* Jared Ingersoll, afterwards an eminent citizen of Pennsylvania. Mr. Ingersoll married Miss Pettit, Mr. Reed's half niece.

he says that it is a delusive project, only intended to hold out to the people of England a specious idea of ministerial clemency and moderation; that they do not expect any good will result from it, nor do they seem to wish it should. Notwithstanding their experience, they still lay great stress on the bravery of their troops, and the cowardice of ours.

We have at length a man-of-war or two in our river; it is reported and credited, that they have taken one vessel with a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition; and another with dry goods from Statia: all our vessels that were going out are returned, and our harbour is completely shut up. Many people have moved out of town, but the alarm is not so great as I should have expected. If you get our papers you will see a terrible wordy war waging on the subject of independence. Some writers have taken up the cudgels against "Common Sense," and the city seems desirous they should all have fair play. I enclose you the day's paper, where you will find an essay, to employ your leisure thoughts upon. I have not yet fixed on the time of moving; like many others, I am waiting to see how the chapter of accidents will turn out, and govern myself accordingly. I never felt so much puzzled to know how to act; I think our business must sink to a very low ebb. Expenses rather increase; to stay in town seems to be imprudent; to remove and give up business entirely, does not seem to be wise. To go into the army seems like abandoning my profession. If I stay here, I have so many avocations that I cannot follow it, even if it was more valuable than it is. In short, I am perplexed with the scene of which one can yet see so little. I think a little time must give us more light. What with the Assembly, the little business of my own, and extra avocations, I have scarce an hour I can call my own. If I stay here I shall be ruined by devoting my whole time to the public for nothing. In the other case, I shall at least bear my own weight. This consideration operates strongly on my mind, and I believe will turn the scale. I expect to see you in two weeks, at farthest; in the mean time must bid you adieu with the usual salutations.

Yours affectionately,

MR. REED TO MR. PETTIT.

Philadelphia, March, 1776.

I have just received your favours of the 8th and 13th March. I cannot say I had much hopes from your journey to New York, therefore am not much disappointed. I have taken the house at Burlington, late the Governor's, at £40 per annum, and shall move into it as soon as I can, unless some new event of a very different kind from what I look for, should fix us all in town. This leads me to tell you what I have heard respecting Mr. Temple, which much corresponds with your account. He brought one letter from

Arthur Lee to Mr. Hancock, fastened somehow in the buttons of his coat. The purport of it was, that Mr. Temple was a true friend to America, and his intelligence to be depended on, which is, that before passing the late bill, a reconciliation was expected by our friends there, but they had now given up all hopes of it; that the commissioners either had sailed, or were to sail with, or soon after him. We had a report that they brought powers to treat with Congress, and were to give us carte-blanche; but I don't find any ground for it. We expect them every hour, but I do not find much good is even looked for from that quarter. The Congress are proceeding in their military preparations, reserving themselves for any great alteration in the civil system, as the temper and inclination of their constituents shall lead; I believe a majority of them would cut the knot to-morrow, but they must have a concurrence of the people, or at least a general approbation of any such material change.

Our accounts from Cambridge leads us to expect some very important intelligence from thence. I have a letter from the General, dated March 9th, wherein he tells me that tired with inactivity, and having got some supply of powder, he took possession of Dorchester Hill, which overlooks the town and harbour of Boston; this he did at the same time that he made a heavy cannonade and bombardment from the Cambridge side:—that the Admiral, upon discovering what had been done, sent word to the General that he could not stay with the ships unless he dispossessed our troops of that ground:—accordingly 4000 men were ordered out under Lord Percy, but they made it so late before they embarked, that the tide was out; and soon after they set sail, a storm of wind came up which drove them by;—some went on shore on Governor's Island, others at the Castle; in short, the whole scheme failed, and they returned to town the next day. During this time, our troops covered themselves effectually at Dorchester. After this, the selectmen of Boston, suspecting a general retreat of the troops, and that Howe would burn the town when he left it, applied to him:—his answer was that he would not do it unless his troops were molested in their departure. This they sent out by a flag,—but the letter not being addressed to any person or signed, the General would take no notice of it, but went on with his works; in this state of things the express came away, since which a vessel from Salem has arrived, whose captain, ——— says that on Saturday night, the 9th instant, the evening of the day our letters are dated, he heard a very heavy cannonade. We suspend our opinions on this intelligence till the arrival of the next express, every hour expected. I propose to set out in about ten days, and intended to have brought Hetty with me as far as your house, but she does not seem willing, as she thinks you are more exposed to alarms than we are. At all events I think I shall call upon you; but if Howe goes off, General Washington will be at New York very soon, that or Halifax being supposed to be the place of his (Gen. Howe's) destination, if he moves from Boston. Manly has taken another prize, with potatoes, sourerout, &c. It is so difficult to form a tolerable judgment of events, that I think you quite right to stay and reserve your-

self for them as long as you can : but if New York should become the scene of military business, I think Amboy must be an unpleasant neighbourhood, in which case it would be advisable for your family at least to come to Burlington. The German officer is made a Brigadier-General, and is learning English with all expedition. He has undoubted credentials both of character and service ; his destination is not yet fixed.

We have no account yet from our fleet, but hourly expected. There have been several arrivals of powder and arms within these three weeks in this port. It is very astonishing we have not a man-of-war in our river. We are all well, and salute you most affectionately.

Yours, &c.

The crisis in the Assembly was however soon over, and a decision made which enabled those already discontented to give the charter institution the crowning blow. On the first of May, the election for additional representatives was held, and each party seems to have arrayed itself for the conflict with the most thorough discipline, there being but two tickets, the patriot or revolutionary ticket, and that supported by the Tories and moderate men. Night after night meetings were held, and every means known to the politicians of the times resorted to, to affect the result. On a very full poll, the whole Whig ticket, with the exception of Mr. Clymer, was defeated, and though the election in the other counties was favourable to the revolutionary party, yet the defeat in the city seems to have given a new impulse to the movements for the demolition of the charter. Events were crowding thickly on a community already highly excited.

On the 9th of May, the sound of heavy firing was heard down the Delaware. This distant cannonade was the first indication that actual war had reached this portion of the Colonies. It made the people know that an enemy was at hand. A very spirited action had taken place between a British sloop of war (the Roebuck) and a flotilla of gondolas manned by Philadelphia sailors, in which the enemy had suffered severely, and were obliged to haul lower down the river. There was a reality in this which aroused the people more effectually than any news of distant victory or defeat. On the next day John Adams's Resolution recommending the various Assemblies and

Conventions to form or remodel their governments, which was probably under discussion when the sound of the distant cannonade burst upon the ear of Congress, was adopted, and without the least delay the Revolutionary Committees recommenced with new spirit their adverse movements in relation to the Charter Assembly.

There is a close and curious coincidence between the movements of the prominent patriots in and out of Congress, which, even in a personal memoir, deserves a passing notice, and shows very clearly that there was entire concert of action as well as of opinion. Mr. Adams's resolution of the 10th of May, was a recommendation to the Assemblies where they existed, and to conventions where no government, sufficient to the exigencies of affairs, was organized, to adopt such forms of government as might be deemed expedient. By the friends of government, comprising under this name, not only loyalists, but the patriot friends of the charter institutions, such as Mr. Dickinson and his adherents, it was earnestly contended that all that Congress desired, could be effected by the existing representation of the people;—that there *was* “a government sufficient to the exigencies of affairs,” and that, therefore, the case did not arise where a convention was needed. It was not easy to resist this interpretation of the act of Congress, and it might have embarrassed the patriot party out of the Assembly, but for another movement made in Congress, which at once relieved them. On the adoption of the resolution, John Adams, Edward Rutledge, and Richard Henry Lee, were appointed a committee to prepare a preamble, which was reported on the 13th, and after earnest debate, adopted on the 15th. It went beyond the resolution. It struck at the root from which all authority under the charter grew. It denied the necessity or reasonableness of oaths of allegiance to *any* Government under the crown,—and it declared that the exercise of every authority under the said crown should be totally suppressed, and all powers of government were to be exerted under the authority of the people alone.

“At four o'clock,” says Christopher Marshall, in his diary for the next day, “went to the Philosophical Hall to meet a

number of persons, to consider what steps might be necessary to take, *on the dissolution of the Government* as published this day. It was concluded to call a convention with speed, and to protest against the present Assembly doing any business in their house until the sense of the Province is taken in that Convention.”*

On the 20th May the Assembly met, but had no quorum, and at the same time the people, to the number of four or five thousand, assembled in general town meeting in the State House Yard, and agreed upon a protest against any further action of the Assembly, which was presented on the first day of its organization. The protest sets forth the words of the preamble, rather than of the Resolution of Congress, and gave it a significance of which perhaps even its authors never dreamed. It renounces in the most solemn terms, the chartered authority of the Assembly, as derived “from our mortal enemy the King of Great Britain, and whose members were elected by such persons as were either in real or supposed allegiance to the said king, to the exclusion of many worthy inhabitants *whom the resolve of Congress hath now rendered electors.*” On the following day, a counter-memorial, signed by William Hamilton as chairman, was presented; and the Assembly, perplexed and alarmed, threatened without, and distracted within, contented itself with directing an inquiry to be made of Congress, as to the precise meaning of the preamble and resolution, and the reference of the whole subject to a committee of which a majority were disaffected to the popular cause.

On the 30th May, Reed, Dickinson, and seven others, mostly Whigs, were made a committee to report on the defences of the harbour of Philadelphia, with authority to confer with the Commander-in-chief, which duty appears to have been promptly executed. After this time, the Speaker was obliged to adjourn the house from day to day for want of a quorum, many of the Whig members absenting themselves in

* This little work, published in 1839, and edited by Mr. W. Duane, jr., is a very valuable contribution to local history. It is in every respect curious and interesting. Christopher Marshall was what is vulgarly known as a “Hickory Quaker,” one who held war to be lawful.

evident despair of effecting any thing ; nor did they attend till the 5th of June, when the proceedings of the Virginia Convention were presented, instructing the delegates in Congress, without reservation, to declare the Colonies free and independent States. A proposal was instantly made, and, after ineffectual opposition, carried, to appoint a committee to prepare new instructions to the Pennsylvania delegates ; and Dickinson, Morris, Reed, Clymer, Pearson, Wilcocks, and Small were made the committee. The constitution of this committee was probably the fruit of some compromise ; the various parties being apparently about equally represented, and the result of their deliberations was such as might have been expected from a body thus organized. The report was made on the 6th of June. It was debated during the 7th, and on the 8th, adopted by a vote of 31 to 12.* The instructions reported by the committee in terms, probably gave satisfaction to no party,—certainly not to the patriots, except so far as they rescinded the instructions of the previous year. Independence was not referred to, except by the most distant implication. With this, the Whigs were forced to be content, and they appear to have been wholly indifferent as to the rest,—for after the vote of the 8th, no quorum attended,† and on the 14th, the instructions were signed by the Speaker in the presence of but thirty-five members, and under this authority forwarded to Congress. Their effect was such as might have been anticipated. Of the seven Pennsylvania delegates in Congress, on the vote of the 1st of July, in committee of the whole, three voted for Independence, and four against it, and on the 4th, two of those who voted adversely to Independence being absent, the vote of Pennsylvania was accidentally, and by a majority of one, given in its favour. Mr. Reed does not appear to have attended the Assembly after the vote on the 8th of June, on rescinding the instructions. All had been effected which could be done, and any effort to save the charter, even if he were disposed to make it, was worse than useless.

* Journals of Assembly, 740.

† Mr. Reed, as will be seen in the next chapter, returned to camp at this time.

The rest of the tale may be briefly told. On the 14th of June, the day on which delegates were elected by the people to the Provincial Conference, out of which the new government was to spring, the Assembly adjourned till the 26th of August. On that day the Speaker and seventeen members attended. The Conference had long before this organized the Convention and adjourned. The Convention had matured though not published its new Constitution, and had assumed all the powers of Government. On the 28th what remained of the Assembly adjourned to meet on the 23d September. Its sessions continued till the 26th, when twenty-three members being present, a member whose name is not recorded on the Journal, moved a series of resolutions denouncing the proceedings of the Convention, which were carried under the previous question, and "the House then rose." Thus ended the Charter Government of Pennsylvania.*

The new Constitution was proclaimed on the 28th of September, and on the 28th November the government was organized by the meeting of the Assembly.

* *Force's American Archives*, p. 987.

CHAPTER IX.

1776.

Reed appointed Adjutant-General — Joins the army at New York — Correspondence with Mrs. Reed — Arrival of Sir William Howe — Webb's Diary — Plot against Washington — Declaration of Independence — Arrival of Lord Howe — Mr. De Berdt's letter brought by Lord Howe — Correspondence of Reed and Robert Morris.

On the 15th April, 1776, General Washington wrote to Mr. Reed from New York, "I am exceedingly concerned to hear of the divisions and parties which prevail with you, and in the Southern Colonies on the score of Independence, &c. These are the shelves we have to avoid, or our bark will split and tumble to pieces,—here lies our great danger, and I tremble when I think of it. Nothing but disunion can hurt our cause. This will ruin it, if great prudence, temper, and moderation are not mixed in our councils, and made the governing principles of our contending parties. When, my good sir, will you be with me? I fear I shall have a difficult card to play in this government, and wish for your assistance and advice to manage it. I have not time to add more than that I am, dear sir, yours most affectionately, &c."

In the latter part of May, the Commander-in-chief visited Philadelphia, and at his instance Congress, with whom he had a personal conference on the 5th June, appointed Mr. Reed to the post of Adjutant-General, vacated by the promotion of General Gates.*

* "Congress then proceeded to the election of an Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General to fill up the vacancies in those offices, when the ballots being taken and examined, Joseph Reed, Esquire, was elected Adjutant-General and Stephen Moylan Quartermaster-General."—*Journals of Congress*. On the same day Hugh Mercer of Virginia was elected a Brigadier-General.—*Force's American Archives*, iv. 713.

" You will be surprised," said he, writing to his wife, then at Burlington, " but I hope not dejected, when I tell you that a great revolution has happened in my prospects and views. Yesterday the General sent for me, and in a very obliging manner pressed me to accept the office of Adjutant-General, which General Gates lately filled. The proposition was new and surprising, so that I requested till this day to consider of it. I objected my want of military knowledge, but several members of Congress, and the General treated it so lightly, and in short said so many things, that I have consented to go. I have been much induced to this measure by observing that this Province will be a great scene of party and contention this summer. The Courts are stopped, consequently no business done in my profession, and at all events my time so engrossed that I have not a moment to devote to keeping up my stock or adding to my law knowledge. The appointments of the office are equal to £700 per annum, which will help to support us till these calamitous times are at an end. Besides, this post is honourable, and if the issue is favourable to America, must put me on a respectable scale. Should it be otherwise, I have done enough to expose myself to ruin. I have endeavoured to act for the best, and hope you will think so."

On the 16th, leaving his family in New Jersey, Mr. Reed resumed his military duties, and joined Washington at New York. The campaign which ensued, from the arrival of General Howe, to the fall of Fort Washington, was one of active interest. It comprised the battle of Long Island, the evacuation of New York, and the skirmishes which occurred before the American troops, which here had their apprenticeship, retreated into New Jersey. This memoir is intended to illustrate the personal relations of the subject of it, to the troubled times in which his lot was cast. This cannot be better done than by freely resorting to private correspondence, especially to his letters written almost daily to his young and distant wife, narrating in the simplest and most unaffected form all that was passing in the busy scene around him. From such materials do we best learn the actual condition of things, the sufferings and privations of the times; and the following series of letters from camp during the campaign is given to the reader with no other alteration than the suppression of domestic detail, of no interest either as illustrative of the character of the writer or his times. The letters, unless when otherwise expressed, are to Mrs. Reed. They form the best kind of diary.

Amboy, June 16.—"I got here safe, last evening, where I spent the day,

the tide not suiting to go to New York by the ferry as I proposed, and my own inclination corresponding with that circumstance. Nothing new has happened at New York. No troops arrived in addition to the fleet.* Our army has received a reinforcement, which I suppose must be from New England. I cannot say I had the most agreeable ride yesterday; the condition in which I left you, and my own reflections, added to the heat and dust of the roads, made it very unpleasant. I hope your next letter will tell me your spirits are recovered. My comfort depends so much on yours, that if you cannot reconcile yourself to absence, I will at all events return to you. I know I shall be censured for want of steadiness, but I am resolved to sacrifice every other consideration to your peace of mind, consistent with my reputation, which I am sure you would not wish me to sully. Make yourself therefore easy, my dear creature. You may rely on two things, that I will not expose myself to any unnecessary danger, and that if your health and comfort are endangered, I will return to you. Kiss the dear children for me."

New York, 21 June.†—"I write you by the last stage, since which nothing important has occurred. My situation is far from a pleasant one; however, I shall in a few days go up to head-quarters, when I hope to find myself more at ease. The office I am in has not much severe duty, but it is so entirely out of my line, that I do not feel myself so easy with it as one of a different kind. Perhaps a little time will reconcile me better to it. We hear nothing of any enemy. Every day is a great acquisition to us. Our army is in very good spirits, and such preparations are made for defence, that if the men do their duty, I hope we shall be able to keep our ground."

26th June—To Mr. Pettit.‡—"The plot you mention, though romantic

* This was the fleet with Governor Tryon on board, which on the arrival of the American army at New York had fallen down to Staten Island. Sir William Howe sailed from Halifax, and arrived at Sandy Hook on the 25th of June.

† "The General has been pleased to appoint Richard Cary and Samuel B. Webb, Esquires, his aide-de-camps, and Alexander Counter Hanson, Esq., assistant-secretary, who are to be obeyed and regarded accordingly. The Honourable Continental Congress have been pleased to give the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel to the aides-de-camp of the Commander-in-chief, and to his principal secretary."—*MS. Orderly Book, June 21st.* "23d. The detachment under Colonel Jacobs, are to go on fatigue at Kingsbridge. At eleven o'clock this evening, a detachment of two hundred and fifty men, under Majors — and Livingston, marched to rout a number of Tories in the swamps of Long Island, and to pick up such men as are known to be notoriously inimical to the liberties of America. Success attend them."—*Webb, MS. Journal.*

‡ This was a plot, comprising many of the disaffected in New York, among others the mayor of the city, the object of which was to produce a mutiny in the

in some of its parts, had a real foundation. It originated with Governor Tryon, and was to be executed by the mayor and inferior agents, whom he had corrupted for that purpose. Its objects, I believe, extended to destroying our magazine and artillery, and rising in arms upon the arrival of the fleet. I cannot think assassinating the Generals had any share in it. A soldier who was one of the General's guard, (a deserter from the regular army,) is under sentence of death. The mayor is in jail. All persons concerned, not in the army, are handed over to the secular power. Those in the army are tried by a court-martial. To have a foreign and intestine enemy at the same time is too much. Nothing but the providence of God, foreign assistance, or a spirit different from what seems lately to have prevailed in Canada, can save us from great distress if not ruin. We just have accounts from that country. General Sullivan has evacuated it, and very prudently, as his stay at the Sorel would have been attended with certain destruction to him and his army, for his retreat being cut off, he must have been starved into a surrender, without striking a blow. Our troops are endeavouring to make a stand at Isle-aux-Noix, while in the mean time Ticonderoga and Crown Point are fortifying with all expedition. I wish there was a good naval force on the lakes. That would do more for our salvation than all the forts we now occupy. The militia are coming in here fast, so that we shall soon have a very formidable army; I hope in good time for the force expected against us. Ships are daily arriving at the Hook, but whether transports and men-of-war, we do not know. Five hundred men of the Highland regiments have been taken in several transports to the northward. We now have eight or ten of their officers prisoners, who have come with their families to settle in this country after it is reduced to obedience! If the enemy put off their arrival a little longer we shall be well prepared to receive them. The post at Kingsbridge is a very strong one, and occupied by troops, who I believe will do their duty. We now have powder plenty. In short, if our attention is not drawn off northward by Burgoyne, who is certainly arrived there, I think we shall do very well here."

Same day—To Mrs. Reed:—“I have received but one letter since I came here, though I have written to you by every stage; your letters were never more necessary, as my knowing that you and the dear children are well, would be some comfort to me amidst the gloom which surrounds us. I do not know any thing more disagreeable than the state of uncertainty with regard to ourselves, and hearing bad news from other quarters with a daily expectation of worse. Your letters miscarrying, make me fearful of

American camp, on the arrival of the British fleet and reinforcements. Mr. Sparks says that the conspirators intended to secure General Washington, and deliver him up to the enemy. The first military execution during the war was occasioned by it.

writing any intelligence. I do not know that I should be happy at home, amidst the confusions which prevail, (if order does not soon come out of them, we shall be in a condition not much to be feared by our enemies,) but I am far from being so here, and I frequently wish for my family and garden. I have been in lodgings ever since I came, till yesterday, when I moved up to head-quarters, where I am treated with great friendship and esteem."

June 27th.—“ We are hourly expecting the fleet to arrive here ; indeed, ships seem to be adding every day. Unless this army is speedily and considerably reinforced, I doubt we shall wage very unequal war. Keep up your spirits, as I endeavour to do mine, reflecting that our cause is just, and that there is a Supreme Being who directs and overrules all. Governor Franklin had something to found his insolence upon. He would not have dared to have behaved so, if a large army had not been soon expected.”

June 27th.—“ I wrote you yesterday, to be left at Bessonett’s, since which we have an account that General Howe has arrived with one hundred and thirty sail of vessels, or rather that he sailed with so many, and is arrived near us himself.* This occasions an express to the Provincial Convention to forward men to this place with all expedition, and gives me this opportunity to write you. I hope you will be able to keep up your spirits, though I acknowledge, in your situation the trial is severe, but it must be reconciled by a sense of duty, and confidence in that Supreme Being who orders all things for the best. My post will not call me into the same danger that other officers are exposed to, as I do not think it right for the General to expose his person, on which all our safety so much depends, more than is necessary for giving orders and directions. Our lot is cast in very difficult and troubled times, in which our utmost fortitude is necessary ; nor do I despair, if the country is animated with a suitable spirit, but if that fails, our case will be desperate indeed, as we have proceeded such lengths, that unless we go further we shall be branded most justly, as the basest and meanest of mankind. Nor shall I think any indignity or subjection too degrading for us. Instead of contesting about, or settling forms of government, we must now oppose the common enemy with spirit and resolution, or all is lost.”

Amboy, June 30th.†—“ I came here last evening from Elizabethtown,

* General Howe arrived on the 25th ; the main body of the fleet on the 29th. Governor Tryon immediately went on board to meet him. The troops were immediately landed on Staten Island, and on 7th July letters were written to Lord George Germain, expressive of entire confidence in the returning loyalty of the people of the Colonies, especially of that immediate neighbourhood.

† On the 29th, General Washington had written to Governor Livingston : “ Since Colonel Reed left this place, I have received certain information from the Hook,

whither I came over by the General's orders, to forward the militia, in consequence of General Howe's arrival at the Hook with a large fleet. Being so near, and wanting to know exactly what number had arrived, I came down here, and am returning this morning. From the number of vessels yet arrived, it does not seem as if a larger force had come than had left Boston; if so, and some supplies of good men are sent us, I hope the issue will be favourable. I fear the spirit of the people begins to flag, or the approach of danger dispirits them. All political disputes about government, &c., should cease, and every nerve be strained for our defence."

1st July, New York.—“The enemy have made no movement yet, but we expect every moment to hear of their landing, at least to get some fresh stock. Mrs. Washington and the other ladies are gone from here. As to myself I feel more composed and easy than at any time since I have been here. Troops are coming in fast, and if they defer an attack any time, we shall have a number sufficient to cope with them. I think there can be little doubt but they will first land on Long Island. Every thing I hope, my dear creature, will turn out right, and we shall again enjoy many happy days together.”

3d July.—“I have not received a line from you since I wrote last, and hope you have not written by the stage, as it with two or three other small vessels was yesterday taken in our sight. The communication with the North River still continues open, and will, I hope, continue so. Yesterday we were alarmed with an account of the fleet coming up. Every thing was accordingly got in readiness to receive them. However, only four came up to the watering place, about nine miles off. In the afternoon we had another alarm, and about forty more came up near them, where they all lay. The militia are coming in very fast, and are as impatient to get home as if they had been here a month. However, they cannot get away without leave. As soon as a good number of what are called the new levies get here, a portion of them will be discharged. We cannot find that Howe has any foreigners with him: if so, I hope we shall be able to keep him at bay for some time at least. We expect troops from New England every day—on them we can depend more than on raw militia, who have never seen a gun fired in anger. The summer is now pretty well wasted. If this army can be kept from penetrating into the country, or getting possession of this place, America is saved.”*

that about forty of the enemy's fleet have arrived there, and others are now in sight, and that there cannot be a doubt but the whole fleet will be in this day and to-morrow. I beg not a moment's time may be lost in sending forward such parts of the militia as Colonel Reed shall mention. We are so very weak at this post, that I must beg you to order the three companies which I mentioned in my last from Staten Island immediately to this city.—*Sparks's "Washington,"* iii. 445.

* Gordon and Stedman, (the one probably copying from the other,) in their his-

July 4th.—“The Philadelphia gentlemen going home this morning, I wrote you a few lines to inform you we are all well. The enemy's fleet is now come up within twelve miles of us; and yesterday a large body of men, with Cortlandt Skinner at their head, landed on Staten Island, and dividing themselves into three bodies, traversed the whole island, with a view of collecting stock and vegetables. The villany and treachery of many of the inhabitants will give them some supplies; for though the General took every method to get off the stock, (force excepted,) they contrived by some means or other to evade it.”

July 6th.—“We have nothing new here—our situation is in all respects the same it was several days ago. The troops from Connecticut begin to come in. It is a most glorious opportunity to make preparation, and if not embraced, we deserve to suffer every calamity. The Jersey militia are all discharged and gone home, from a full confidence derived from every species of intelligence, that the enemy wait for the fleet from Europe, before they begin the attack.”

The correspondence may here properly be interrupted by an incidental reference to events occurring elsewhere than at New York. On the 10th, independence was proclaimed at camp, and the Declaration read under general orders, at the head of each regiment. The statue of the king in the Bowling Green was thrown down by the populace.* Yet no one can read the private correspondence of the times, without being struck with the slight impression made on either the army or the mass of the people by the Declaration. Mr. Reed in his letters does not allude to it. The truth was, that the Declaration in itself

tories of the war, have published what purports to be an extract of a letter from Colonel Reed to “a member of Congress, dated 4th July, expressive of great discontent with the condition of the army.” The contrast of such a letter to the one in the text, justifies the impression either that it is fabricated, or, what is probable, misdated. At a late period, before the army left New York Island, as will be seen, he did express great and very reasonable discontent.

* This is thus noticed in general orders of the 10th July:—“Though the General doubts not the persons who pulled down and mutilated the statue in the Broadway last night were actuated by zeal in the public cause, yet it has so much the appearance of a riot, and want of order in the army, that he disapproves the manner, and directs that in future these things shall be avoided by the soldiery, and left to be executed by the proper authority.”

“*July 10.*—Last night the statue of George 3d was tumbled down and beheaded, the troops having long had an inclination to do so, thought the time of publishing a declaration of independence a favourable opportunity, for which they received a check in this day's orders.”—Webb. MS.

was a mere form, though, as will be seen, a most important and substantial one. An army of rebels, with swords drawn against their king, cared little whether there was a proclamation of independence or no. In point of fact, independence had existed long before. But though a form, as an authoritative renunciation of the metropolitan control, it at once produced its effect.

On the very day when independence was proclaimed at camp, within a hundred miles of Sandy Hook was the fleet of which Colonel Reed's last letter spoke, bearing Lord Howe as a special commissioner, charged with a plan of reconciliation, and clothed with full powers to carry it into effect. The Declaration of Independence threw an obstacle in the way of negotiation, which never was surmounted. Though it is very clear, that the terms which the royal commissioners were authorized to offer, would at any time after April, 1775, have been rejected, yet it is by no means certain that, had Lord Howe arrived a few weeks sooner, and the preliminary point of form not arisen, an effect might not have been produced in portions of the Colonies, the extent of which it is not easy to calculate. Even as it was, many of the most thorough patriots, as will presently be seen, did not regard conciliation as hopeless, but thought form ought to be so far relaxed as to admit negotiation; and Congress sent a committee of its most distinguished members to confer with Lord Howe, in the face of an express declaration that he could not and would not recognise them, except as private gentlemen.

The personal character of the Admiral to whom the chief authority was given, was such as to give him the chance of a fair hearing. He had been, to a certain extent, friendly to the Colonial cause. He and other members of his family had manifested, especially in their intercourse with Dr. Franklin in Great Britain, an amiable solicitude to restore harmony. He was a man of ability and unquestioned integrity; and there is, in the fact of his willingness to treat with Congress after the battle of Long Island, which to the royal cause was a victory, an illustration not only of the manliness of his temper, but of his sagacious forecast of the possible result of a contest whose

victories were so dearly purchased. Lord Howe had, before leaving England, put himself in communication with all those through whom he might approach the American leaders, and, among others, with Mr. De Berdt, from whom he was the bearer of a letter to Mr. Reed, which was sent up unopened the day after the British fleet came to anchor. But it was vain; and the preliminary difficulty of form, raised almost immediately on Lord Howe's attempt to correspond with Washington, at once prevented all understanding. Mr. De Berdt's letter is dated at London, May 3d, 1776, and is as follows:—

D. DE BERDT TO MR. REED.

DEAR REED,—

I am now set down to write you a letter on the most important subject, and of the most difficult nature I ever yet attempted, and I scarcely know how to advance, nor will my mind suffer me to retreat, as my judgment is fully convinced the design is good, and my heart is warm in the cause.

You must know since my Lord Howe's important appointment as Commander-in-chief of his Majesty's forces in America, I have made it my business to learn his character as a nobleman, a statesman, and an officer;—as a man, he has urbanity and great goodness of heart to recommend him;—as a politician, solid sense and sound principles with moderation; and as a commander, ability and valour. Such qualifications command esteem and respect, and it is a satisfaction to a feeling mind, that so momentous an embassy as his lordship's is so happily placed. But as I had reason to believe he had expressed the most anxious solicitude to bring about an accommodation without bloodshed, and to draw the sword with the greatest reluctance, and that these expressions were not only the language of his lips, but the dictate of his heart, I had a great desire to be introduced to him, and this day I had the honour of a conference, when his lordship's conversation not only confirmed the report, but his friendly disposition towards America, and assurances of his inclination to effect a reconciliation without force, far exceeded my expectation: and though the assurances of great men are frequently without meaning or intention, I have the strongest belief in what he said, and the greatest faith in his peaceful intentions.

Do, my dear friend, let me persuade you that Lord Howe goes to America as a mediator, and not as a destroyer. *I firmly believe it, upon my honour.* Were it prudent in me to reveal all he said, I would most cheerfully and readily do it. I quote not his lordship's authority for what I say, but give you my opinion, on a well-grounded belief of what I advance. This he has declared, he had rather meet you, and that immediately on his arrival, in

the wide field of argument, than in the chosen ground for battle, and I am confident, a parley on the footing of gentlemen and friends, is his wish and desire, and it is generally believed with his disposition to treat, he has power to compromise and adjust, nor do I think, if a conference should be brought about, any thing unbecoming a gentleman will be desired, or unreasonable concessions expected. These things believed, I would not be happy in my own mind, without communicating them to you, and Lord Howe has promised to take charge of the letter; I beg therefore to recommend them to your most serious consideration.

The very thought, my dear friend, of being instrumental in bringing about a peaceful accommodation, is better felt than expressed, when I consider the honour lately conferred on me by the province of New Jersey; it is my duty, my regard for the country and people makes it my inclination, and my affection for you and your family draws me into it with the cords of love.

My Lord Howe is not unacquainted with your name. I have so high an opinion of your abilities and honour, and have had such repeated instances of your friendship and affection, that every thing has been said by me that you can desire or expect; and I have not a doubt if a treaty or parley is brought about in which you may be engaged, every degree of respect you can desire, or attention you can wish, will be shown you. If this letter, from the exigency of the times, should be inspected, I hope it will not be suppressed, but receive an immeditate despatch to you: — rest assured, my dear friend, my motives are good, whatever may be suspected to the contrary.

My dutiful regards attend my dear mother, and my affection and love are ever with you and my sister. I am

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

DENNIS DE BERDT.

Immediately on receiving it, Mr. Reed thought it his duty to communicate it to Congress, and enclosed a copy of it to Robert Morris, then a delegate from Pennsylvania. His accompanying letter, and Mr. Morris's answer, now for the first time published, are curious in every point of view, as illustrative of the state of feeling in the minds of the stoutest patriots, even after independence was declared. They wrote to each other with the directness and candour of fair-minded and patriotic men, above the fear of mutual misunderstanding.

MR. REED TO ROBERT MORRIS, ESQ.,

ONE OF THE DELEGATES OF THE PROVINCE OF PENNSYLVANIA IN THE HON.
CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

Head-Quarters, New York, July 18, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—

I received this letter by Lord Howe from a gentleman of character in England. You will observe it has the appearance of a mere private letter, but from the contents and some corresponding circumstances, I have reason to believe it was not intended merely as such. In this view I communicated to the General, and now forward it to be made use of as your good judgment may direct. If it can be improved in any respect for the public advantage, either to give time or discover the true powers these commissioners have, or in any other way, I shall most cheerfully take such a post as my situation and abilities will admit, and as may be directed. Or if you think no advantage or benefit can arise from taking notice of it, you will please to suppress it.

I fear the die is irrevocably cast, and that we must play out the game, however doubtful or desperate. My principles have been much misunderstood if they were supposed to militate against reconciliation. I had one dogma of political faith to which I constantly adhered, that as united councils and united strength alone could enable us to support this contest, private opinions and those of mere local authority should be subservient to the supreme decision of Congress. From the purity and extent of its intelligence, and the abilities of its members, I derived my hopes of political safety, and therefore beheld with concern every attempt to control the judgment and bind down the opinions of any of its members by instructions of other devices formed as they must be on the partial intelligence of some, and the interested or timid views of others. My private judgment led me to think that if the two great cardinal points of exemption from British taxation and charge of internal government could have been secured, our happiness and prosperity would have been best promoted by preserving the dependence. The Declaration of Independence is a new and very strong objection to entering into any negotiation inconsistent with that idea. But I fancy there are numbers, and some of them firm in the interests of America, who would think an overture ought not to be rejected, and if it could be improved into a negotiation which could secure the two points I have mentioned above, would think the blood and treasure expended well spent. I have no idea from any thing I have seen or can learn that if we should give the General and Admiral a full and fair hearing, the proposition would amount to any thing short of unconditional submission, but it may be worth considering whether that once known, and all prospect of securing American liberty in that way

being closed, it would not have a happy effect to unite us into one chosen band, resolved to be free or perish in the attempt. There was a time when one sentiment pervaded the whole country ; Whig and Tory, however differing in other things, agreed that the claim of taxation by a British Parliament could never be admitted. If these Commissioners have no concessions to make on this point, it must be evident to the whole world that resistance cannot be called our choice. It is the only alternation left to slavery and wretchedness.

What will become of our affairs in Canada, or *rather in this Province* in the Northern Department? Our General has more trouble and concern with that Department than his own, and yet after every step taken and supply sent, we are told of great necessities and wants arising from incredible *waste*. If Mr. Schuyler is so good a quarter-master and commissary, why is there such incredible waste. In short, my dear sir, if some speedy and decisive measure is not taken in this matter, in my opinion that army will waste and disperse, leaving the enemy an easy passage into the heart of these Colonies. I trust and hope amidst the changes which have been made in our Province, and in most of which I could not agree, the public will not lose your services in Congress. I know many things must be very repugnant to your temper and judgment, but so it has proved in the struggles of all free states and countries. The time and place will come when public virtue will meet its reward.

The firm patriot there,
Who made the welfare of mankind his care,
Tho' vex'd with envy and by faction cross'd,
Shall find his generous labour was not lost.

Be pleased to present my respects to Mr. Willing, and believe me, with much truth and esteem, &c., &c.

ROBERT MORRIS TO MR. REED.

From the Hills on Schuylkill, July 20th, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—

I received your obliging letter of the 13th, yesterday, in Congress, and should have been tempted to have laid the enclosure immediately before Congress, had not a letter from the same person on the same subject and in a similar style, addressed to Mr. Kinsey of New Jersey, been read in Congress the day before. The temper of the house was plain, and you may judge what it was, when I tell you that the only inquiry the letter produced, was, how it got into Mr. Kinsey's hands. I am sorry to say there are some amongst us, that cannot bear the thought of reconciliation on any terms. To these men, all propositions of the kind sound like high treason against the state, and I

really believe they would sooner punish a man for this crime than for bearing arms against us. I cannot help condemning this disposition, as it must be founded in keen resentment or on interested views,—whereas we ought to have the interest of our country, and the good of mankind, to act as the main-spring in all our public conduct. I think with you, that if the commissioners have any propositions to make, they ought to be heard; should they disclose powers different from what we imagine them to be vested with, and an inclination to employ those powers favourably for America, it is our duty to attend to such offers, weigh well the consequences of every determination we come to, and in short, to lay aside all prejudices, resentments, and sanguine notions of our own strength, in order that reason may influence and wisdom guide our counsels.

If the Admiral and General are really desirous of a conference, I think, and hope they will address our General properly,—this may be expected, if they have powers beyond granting pardons; if they have not, it is idle for them to solicit any intercourse, as no good can possibly arise to them or their cause from it; but on our part, I think that good policy requires that we should hear all they have to say. I am not for making any sacrifice of dignity, but still I would hear them if possible, because if they can offer peace on admissible terms, I believe the great majority of America would still be for accepting it. If they can only offer *pardons*, and that is fully ascertained, it will firmly unite all America in their exertions to support the independency they have declared, and it must be obvious to every body that our *united* efforts will be absolutely necessary. This being the case, why should we fear to treat of peace, or to hear the commissioners on that subject? If they can offer terms that are advantageous, and honourable for this country, let us meet them. If they cannot, we are not in a situation or temper to ask or receive pardons, and all who do not mean to stoop to this ignominious submission will consequently take up their arms with a determination to conquer or to die. If they offer or desire a conference, and we reject it, those who are already dissatisfied will become more so, others will follow their example, and we may expect daily greater disunion and disaffection in every part of these States; at least such are my apprehensions on this subject.

I have uniformly voted against and opposed the Declaration of Independence, because, in my poor opinion, it was an improper time, and will neither promote the interest nor redound to the honour of America; for it has caused division when we wanted union, and will be ascribed to very different principles than those which ought to give rise to such an important measure. I did expect my conduct on this great question would have procured my dismissal from the great Council, but find myself disappointed, for the Convention has thought proper to return me in the new delegation and although my interest and inclination prompt me to decline the service, yet I cannot depart from one point which first induced me to enter the public line. I mean an opinion that it is the duty of every individual to act

his part in whatever station his country may call him to, in times of difficulty, danger, and distress. Whilst I think this a duty, I must submit, although the councils of America have taken a different course from my judgment and wishes. I think that the individual who declines the service of his country because its councils are not conformable to his ideas, makes but a bad subject; a good one will follow, if he cannot lead.* Until the good news from Carolina raised our spirits, they were constantly depressed by every account we received from the northern army.† Such scenes of mismanagement, misconduct, and ill success as have been exhibited in that quarter, ever since the loss of the brave Montgomery, have no parallel.

I hope you are, or will be properly strengthened and supported at New York. For my own part, I don't like your situation there, but think you had better give up that city to the enemy, than let them get behind and pen you in there, as they were cooped in Boston last year. However, I don't pretend to any judgment in this matter, nor to have considered the subject; my confidence in the abilities of General Washington is entire. His life is the most valuable in America, and whenever an engagement happens, I sincerely hope he will think how much depends on it, and guard it accordingly. The public papers will announce to you the new appointments and changes here, and as I have not much unemployed time, I am always ready to spare the use of my pen. This being Sunday morning, and in the country, I have spun out this letter to a length not common with me now-a-days. I beg my compliments to the General. I dined in company with Mrs. Washington yesterday at Colonel Harrison's, and expect her here at dinner to-day. Remember me to General Mifflin, Colonels Shee and Moylan, and believe me to be very sincerely yours,

ROBERT MORRIS.

P. S. I will lay the London letter before Congress to-morrow.†

* Mr. Morris signed the Declaration of Independence, and took his full share of the fearful responsibility of the measure. His opinions, thus honestly held and expressed, affected his influence and popularity but temporarily. Those who differed from him did him full justice.

† The good news from the South was that of the gallant defence of Sullivan's Island on 28th of June, against the British fleet and army under Sir Peter Parker and General Clinton, one of the most brilliant affairs of the war. Sir John Barrow, in his life of Lord Howe, (pp. 90, 91,) notices the inadequate reinforcements furnished to him after his arrival at New York.

† It seems that Patrick Henry held at this time the same guarded opinions on the subject of independence, (*Sparks's Biography*, xviii. p. 120.) The letters of Charles Lee on this point, preserved among the Morris MSS., are very curious.

CHAPTER X.

1776.

Plans of reconciliation—Letters from Camp—Interview with the British Adjutant-General—Colonel Reed's Memoranda—Letters to Mrs. Reed and others from Camp—Slowness of recruiting—Arrival of the Hessians on Staten Island—Dr. Franklin's letter to Lord Howe—Advice to destroy New York—Naval action on the North River—Lord Drummond and Mr. Temple—French affairs.

WHAT effect “the London Letter” and the assurances it gave of Lord Howe’s friendly disposition, and of the possible extent of his authority, produced on the mind of Mr. Reed, will be seen from the letter written on the day after its receipt to his wife.

TO MRS. REED.

New York, July 16, 1776.

I make no doubt you will be agreeably surprised, as I was yesterday, on receiving a letter from our brother Dennis. It was endorsed “per favour of Lord Howe,” and sent with the seal untouched. He mentions that he had seen Lord Howe, and is well assured that he comes as a mediator rather than as an enemy, and most earnestly pressing me to promote a conference, in order to an accommodation. I have not time to copy it now, but will send it to you by the first opportunity. No one can wish more for peace or would promote it more heartily, if the terms were such as to give us any security for those articles which all agree, both Whig and Tory, are essential to our liberty and safety. These are exemption from Parliamentary taxation, and regulation of our internal government. If security was had of these and other articles still insisted on, I should with a safe conscience retire, and would do it. The annihilation of our trade, the difficulty of procuring men and supplies for another campaign, the misery and desolation which must ensue even if we should in the end be victorious, are important considerations. Beside, from some late instances, I very much fear many of our troops will fail in spirit, especially if taken by surprise.

I do not know what prospect there is of foreign alliances. That would certainly turn the scale decisively in our favour, but at present we are playing a very unequal game. Lord Howe seems so anxious to negotiate, that I think we may lengthen out the time without intermitting our preparations.

Nor for my own part do I see any inconvenience or danger in a conference of proper persons to know his powers and propositions of peace. We can easily judge of them perhaps from his declarations, for among the papers sent on shore, are letters to every Governor, enclosing declarations. In them you have the whole, and if negotiation would not tend to slacken our preparations, I would wish to know the extent of these powers which he says are so great. I think if only granting pardons is meant, and no concession on the point of taxation, it would unite all to perseverance and resolution, trusting the event to Providence.

On the next day, or the next day but one, Lord Howe sent a flag borne by an officer of the navy, to seek a conference with Washington. Colonel Reed was deputed to meet him. The point of form at once presented itself, and he thus describes the interview:—

TO MR. PETTIT.

New York, July 15, 1776.

After writing the above, a flag came in from Lord Howe. The general officers advised the General not to receive any letter directed to him as a private gentleman. I was sent down to meet the flag. A gentleman, (an officer of the navy,) met us, and said he had a letter from Lord Howe to Mr. Washington.* I told him we knew no such person in the army. He then took out a letter directed to George Washington, Esquire, and offered it to me. I told him I could not receive a letter to the General under such a direction. Upon which he expressed much concern, said the letter was rather of a civil than military nature; that Lord Howe regretted he had not come sooner, that he had great powers, and it was much to be wished the letter could be received. I told him I could not receive it consistently with my duty. Here we parted. After he had got some distance he put about, and we again met him. He then asked me under what title General, —but catching himself, Mr. Washington chose to be addressed. I told him the General's station in the army was well known, that they could be at no loss, that this matter had been discussed last summer, of which I supposed the Admiral could not be ignorant. He then expressed his sorrow at the disappointment, and here we parted. I cannot help thinking but that we shall have a renewal of it to-day, or a communication of the business in some

* *July 14th.* "A flag of truce from the fleet appeared, on which Colonel Reed and myself went down to meet it. About half way between Governor's and Staten Island, Lieutenant Brown of the Eagle offered a letter from Lord Howe, directed to 'George Washington, Esq.,' which on account of its direction we refused to receive, and parted with the usual compliments."

July 17th. "A flag from the enemy with an answer from General Howe, about the resolves of Congress, directed 'George Washington, Esq., &c. &c. &c.,' which was refused."—*Webb MS.*

other way. For though I have no hopes that the letter contains any terms to which we can accede, or in short is any thing more than a summons of submission, yet the curiosity of the people is so great, and if it is, as may be supposed, couched in strong and debasing terms, it would animate the army exceedingly to do their duty.*

The request was renewed on the 19th, when an Aid of General Howe desired to know if the Adjutant-General of the British Army could be admitted to an interview with *General Washington*.† This was immediately acceded to, and the interview took place the day after, in the presence of Colonel Reed and several of the general officers of the American Army. The following account of the meeting is copied from the original notes taken at General Washington's suggestion, immediately on its conclusion.‡

"Colonel Patterson, Adjutant-General of the troops under General Howe on Staten Island, upon his first address, endeavoured to explain the address of the letter, as deeming it consistent with propriety and founded on a similar address last summer to General Howe. That General Howe did not mean to derogate from the respect or rank of General Washington, but conceived such an address consistent with what had been used by ambassadors or plenipotentiaries where difficulties of rank had arisen—that '*&c. &c.*' implied every thing. The General replied it did so, and *any thing* and (*illegible*) that his letter last summer was an answer to one received under a like (*illegible*).

* *Letter to Mr. Pettit, 15th July.* After describing the passage of the men-of-war up the North River, he says: "One use of fortifying and defending this post is now over, nor can I see the propriety of risking the fate of America and this army, as they seem to me to depend on the single cost of defending this spot of ground against a more numerous and much better provided army. At least I think we should have a magazine of arms and ammunition as a reserve in case it should be wanted, for now our whole stock is here, and if we should meet with any disaster, I don't know how we should repair it."

† *July 19th.* "A flag appeared this morning, when Colonel Reed and myself went down, when an aid-du-camp to General Howe met us, and said as there appeared to be an insurmountable obstacle between the two Generals, by way of correspondence, General Howe desired his Adjutant-General might be admitted to an interview with his *Excellency General Washington*. On which Colonel Reed in the name of *General Washington* consented and pledged his honour for his being safe returned. The aid-du-camp said the Adjutant-General would meet us to-morrow forenoon."—*Webb MS.*

‡ These are the original notes in Mr. Reed's writing; they differ in some particulars, not material, from the revised account sent to Congress, and published at the time.—*Sparks's Washington*, vol. v. p. 14.

Colonel Patterson then produced a letter directed to 'George Washington, Esq. &c. &c.', which he showed but did not offer. General Washington then said that a letter directed to a person acting in a public character should have some inscription, otherwise it must appear a mere private letter, to which Colonel Patterson made general answers, and disavowing all intentions of failure in respect, &c., always addressing the General by the title of *your Excellency*. Upon the General absolutely declining the letter, he then said he would as well as he could recollect, deliver General Howe's sentiments on a message and some resolutions of Congress transmitted last Monday, that he disapproved of every infraction of the rights of humanity, but that the Department of Canada was not under his control. He then looked over a copy of a letter, as if to refresh his memory, and said he had expressed nearly the words.

"Colonel Patterson then mentioned that he was directed to mention the case of General Prescott, who they were informed was treated with great rigour, and that from his age and infirmities it was apprehended it might have fatal consequences. The General answered that General Prescott's case had not fallen within his particular knowledge, but that he had endeavoured to make the situation of all those within his notice as easy as possible. He then mentioned the case of Colonel Allen, and the officers confined in Boston jail. Colonel Patterson said that Colonel Allen's case was only known by information from General Washington to General Howe, but that it was out of the latter's department. That whenever the affairs at Boston admitted, the prisoners were treated with humanity and even kindness, which he not only asserted on his honour, but could prove.

"Colonel Patterson then observed that a proposal having been made of exchanging Skene for Lovel which they would now do, General Washington replied that the proposal having come from Congress, and been rejected, it must be renewed from thence. He then went into a declaration of Lord and General Howe's great desire of accommodation, and would have his visit understood as making the first advances; that he apprehended great benefit would arise from a more free intercourse. It was what the General much wished, and therefore regretted the difficulties that had arisen. It was then observed that the situation of the prisoners might have been much straitened from the behaviour of the officers who had broken their parol and endeavoured to escape. This, Colonel Patterson disapproved, and said these gentlemen much mistook the propriety of conduct, but that his Excellency should not draw public inferences from the misbehaviour of a few individuals, and that if a remonstrance were made, these persons would be punished. Colonel Patterson then mentioned that Lord Howe and his brother had been specially nominated Commissioners by the King, which was to be considered as a mark of favour and regard to America; that they had great powers and would find great pleasure in effecting an accommodation. General Washington observed, that from what appeared or had transpired on that subject they were only to grant pardons; that those who

had committed no fault, needed no pardon; that we were only defending what we deemed our indisputable rights. Colonel Patterson then said this was a matter which would open a very wide field. He behaved with much politeness and attention, expressed strong acknowledgments that the ceremony of blinding him usually had on similar occasions, had been dispensed with. So the conference broke up. He then was invited and pressed to take part in a small collation, which he declined, alleging his late breakfast, and impatience to return to General Howe—regretted that he had not executed his commission as amply as he wished. After an introduction to the general officers, who came forward, finding he did not purpose staying, he took his leave, and was safely conducted to his boat.”*

Though this point of form was subsequently yielded by the British generals, and a correspondence as to exchange of prisoners and other incidental matters was carried on during the campaign, yet its very occurrence and the steadfastness with which it was for a time insisted on, shows how far beyond the reach of reconciliation the quarrel had advanced. But we must resume the correspondence, and with it the details of a soldier’s anxious life.

To Mr. Pettit, 22d July.—“The spirit shown by the militia of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, is a very encouraging circumstance; but the number of military men, especially in the former, bears so small a proportion, that I fear

* *July 20th.* “At twelve o’clock we met the flag; took Lieutenant-Colonel Patterson of the 63d regiment into our barge, and escorted him safe to town to Colonel Knox’s quarters, where his Excellency General Washington attended with his suite and Life-guards,—received and had an interview of about an hour with him. We then escorted him back in safety to his own barge. In going and coming, we passed in front of the Grand Battery, but did not blindfold him—sociable and chatty all the way.”—*Webb MS.*

General Howe thus describes these interviews in a letter to Lord George Germain. “The Commander-in-chief of the Rebel Forces sent me the enclosed letter and narrative of some past transactions in Canada, which I thought proper to answer in general terms, directing to ‘George Washington, Esq., &c. &c. &c.’ as the most unexceptionable form of address. The officer sent to receive the flag would not receive my letter, as it did not express his General’s titles. In consequence of which I sent Lieutenant-Colonel Patterson, Adjutant-General, a few days afterwards, to remonstrate upon this and other circumstances relative to the usage of General Prescott, and several officers in the enemy’s possession, and to mention an exchange of prisoners. This interview was more polite than interesting. However, it induced me to change my superscription for the attainment of an end so desirable, and in this view I flatter myself it will not be disapproved.”—*Sparks’s Washington*, iv. p. 4.

they will soon grow tired, as the fighting duty of the camp is much the smallest. I do not think our enemies gain so much by those who openly join them as by those who stay amongst us and propagate their doctrines to the discouragement of others, or perhaps convey them intelligence. For myself, I confess, the formidable preparations against us form so striking a contrast to our strength, that I cannot help feeling great anxiety for the event. The strength of an army ought to be known to very few, and is a secret not to be entrusted to a letter. All I can say, ours is exaggerated every way. The New England regiments are most amazingly short of their complement, and I must say, that now that the danger is removed from their own doors, that they seem too much at ease. Canada too, is the source of much uneasiness. Every thing there seems to have got into a bad train, nor do I expect that Gates will much mend it. He is a good disciplinarian, but has not the commanding genius or firmness of mind for such a post—but this between ourselves. My wishes for negotiation are without hope; the parties are so wide, that I cannot form the most distant expectation of it. Yet, if the spirit of the people be what I hope it is, some good may arise from knowing the full extent of their powers; that all pretext and excuse may be wholly removed, for nothing more enfeebles the mind than that suspense which leaves it doubtful whether it will be called on to act or not. I congratulate you on the accounts from Carolina. Letters from thence, which are more full than the accounts published by Congress, give us reason to hope the operations of the enemy in that quarter are effectually defeated for the summer. Our situation in many respects resembles theirs; should it be equally successful, it will be a most happy result. The Jersey new levies, both officers and men, are very tardy. If they mean to benefit the service they should hasten forward. Unless under some suitable arrangement previous to an attack, little is to be expected from them. What do the people say to Lord Howe's declaration? I see it is published in the newspapers."

Same day, to Mrs. Reed.—“We have no news except the arrival of ten ships, which came in yesterday, and we suppose make part of the expected reinforcements; from their long delay we had hopes they had met with calms or some disaster. It seems likely that it will be some time before any thing of consequence takes place. If our troops would come in as they should do, some stroke might be made upon the enemy before they collect their whole force. This is what we much wish, but have not strength sufficient. As to seeing you before the summer is over, I do not allow myself to think of it. When the path of duty is plain, one must pursue it, leaving the event to Providence. A second parting, under the prospects we now have, would be very distressing to us both, and would renew those gloomy sensations which I have not been able wholly to conquer. I trust we shall have a happy meeting in the fall, which will be infinitely better than a painful interview of a few hours now. You ask whether Lord Howe brought any foreign troops with him. He did not; he came in alone, but

we suspect these vessels yesterday brought a part of them. We shall know in a very short time. Shocking reflection! that the nation we once so much loved and respected should hire barbarous mercenaries to destroy us.* They may possibly conquer us, but all affection and confidence are gone for ever. By their great exertions, and leaving England so bare of troops, I fear they have settled matters with France so as to have no apprehensions from that quarter. Our situation here, apart from public considerations, is very pleasant. The General is very kind and obliging, but we have neither such an army nor such a council as last year, and yet we want it more. If other concerns would have admitted it, we should have passed a pleasant summer on the banks of the Delaware, but this is not a time for ease and enjoyment.”

July 26th.†—“I am very sorry to see such a general disinclination, even to hear of accommodation,—for though there seems little probability of it on terms which can be accepted, yet, the man must be uncommonly wicked or uncommonly stupid, who does not wish for peace. I do not think Lord Howe has any powers to concede anything, and, as I observed to the Adjutant-General, the uniting the civil and military powers in the same person, looks as if conquest rather than peace and reconciliation was intended. I think a specification of the commissioners’ powers, if obtained, would show that nothing but simple unconditional submission will do. This

* Wordsworth, in his pamphlet on the Convention of Cintra has the following passage: “The ministers of that day found it an easy task to hire a band of Hessians and to send it across the Atlantic, that they might assist in bringing the Americans, (according to the phrase then prevalent,) to reason. The force with which these troops would attack, was gross, tangible, and might be calculated; but the spirit of resistance which their presence would create, was subtle, etherial, mighty, and incalculable. Accordingly, from the moment when these foreigners landed, men who had no interest, no business in the quarrel, but what the wages of their master bound them to, and he imposed upon his miserable slaves; nay, from the first rumour of their destination, the success of the British was, (as hath since been affirmed by judicious Americans,) impossible.”—*Wordsworth’s pamphlet on the Convention of Cintra*, p. 140.

† *From the Orderly Book, July 24th, (MS.)—“The General being sensible of the difficulty and expense of providing clothes of almost any kind for the troops, feels an unwillingness to recommend, much more to order, any kind of uniform; but as it is absolutely necessary that the men should have clothes, and appear decent and tight, he earnestly encourages the use of hunting shirts with long breeches made of the same cloth, garter-fashion about the legs, to all those yet unprovided. No dress can be had cheaper—none more convenient, as the wearer may be cool in warm weather, and warm in cool weather, by putting on under-clothes which will not change the outer dress, winter or summer. Besides which, it is a dress justly supposed to carry no small terror to the enemy, who think every such person a complete marksman.”*

would silence all opposers of the public measures, and, in my opinion, animate our own men; seeing every other hope gone, they would rely upon their own strength, and no enemy is so dreadful as a desperate one. * * * * As to this place, we have a hope that with good troops, and a sufficient number of them, we may maintain our ground; but we dare not even hope for good news from Canada:—A sickly, beaten, dispirited army,—quarrelling generals,—provincial jealousies,—and disputes added to a most incredible waste or embezzlement of all stores and provisions, leave us so little chance of success, that we dread the sight of a letter or express from thence."

August 1st.—“I have received your letter of the 27th inst. I find you had my account of the conversation with Colonel Patterson, since which I see the narrative published in the newspapers more fully, and as I drew it up on further recollection. They continue to hold forth still, very strong general professions. Two gentlemen from Massachusetts Bay, went yesterday, by permission, on board the Eagle; they were very civilly treated, but Lord Howe told them, that although he might address General Washington verbally, or send to him under an address denoting his authority or rank, he could not do it in writing. However he seemed to have given up all hopes of a reconciliation. He seemed very much affected at an expression of Congress respecting their family, about two months ago.* A most excellent letter from Dr. Franklin to him, was sent on board, in answer to one he had sent the Doctor. If I could have done it, I would have taken a

* Mr. Sparks has this interesting note to his *Life of Washington* (p. 185): “On 30th July, Colonel Palfrey, Paymaster-General of the army, went on board Lord Howe’s ship with another gentleman, to negotiate an exchange of prisoners. In a letter to Congress, Colonel Palfrey said, ‘We were treated with the utmost politeness and civility by Lord Howe. He spoke with the highest respect of General Washington, and lamented the nice distinctions which, he said, prevented his addressing him by letter, and said he wished to convey his sentiments to him in any mode of address that might prevent his being blamed by the king, his master. In all his discourse he called him *General Washington*, and frequently said, the *States of America*. He said the Congress had greatly hurt his feelings by reminding him in one of their publications of the esteem and respect they had for the memory of his brother, and drawing by manifest inference, a contrast between the survivors and the deceased; that no man could feel more sensibly the respect shown to their family, than his Lordship and the General; that they should always esteem America for it, and particularly Massachusetts Bay; and added, I hope America will one day or other be convinced, that, in our affection for that country, we also are HOWES. His Lordship, when speaking of his brother was greatly affected, and I could perceive a tear standing in his eye. When we parted he desired his compliments to General Washington.’ The brother here alluded to was the gallant Lord Howe who was killed near Ticonderoga in 1758. The Province of Massachusetts Bay appropriated money for erecting a monument to him in Westminster Abbey.”

copy of it. I remember one sentence, by which you may judge of the whole. He said, ‘That Britain as an ambitious nation had too great a lust of power,—as a warlike one, too much military pride,—and as a commercial one, too great a thirst for a gainful monopoly, to leave us room to hope for accommodation or reunion. That he (Dr. F.) knew too well the deficient knowledge and abounding pride of the nation, ever to expect they would forgive the injuries they had done us.’ The letter was all of a piece, and concluded with saying he was ‘firmly persuaded that dispassionate posterity would consign to infamy those whose counsels had made the breach, nor would even success preserve from dishonour those who had any share in conducting the war:—he therefore believed his lordship would, as he saw accommodation to be hopeless, renounce this odious command, and return to a more honourable private station.* I am, thank God, entirely recovered, and as to health, very well,—as to spirits but middling. I know too much of our situation to be very sanguine,—but yet, I flatter myself, unless taken by a greater surprise than I hope we ever shall be, we shall do very well. I suspect the foreigners are coming. About thirty sail are now coming into the Hook.† Near twenty came up a day or two ago. We have had very little intelligence from Staten Island for some days. Our army is very sickly.”

* Dr. Franklin’s letter, as is apparent from the above criticism, was suited well enough to the times at which it was written. But now that we regard such matters calmly, it is not easy to reconcile its vehemence of language, with the proper and most expedient decorum which should characterize such a correspondence,—still less with the habitual caution of the writer. No one would believe, from the extract given by Mr. Reed, or from the letter itself, (*Franklin’s Works*, v. 99,) that it was in answer to a very friendly letter from Lord Howe. When Dr. Franklin’s reply was received by Lord Howe, in the presence of Colonel Palfrey and Mr. Tracy, the two New England gentlemen to whom Mr. Reed refers, he exhibited much surprise at its tone, and when he finished reading it, said “that his old friend expressed himself very warmly.” On Colonel Palfrey’s observing that he (Lord Howe) had now a fair opportunity to mention to his friend Dr. Franklin in a private letter, his design in coming out, and what his expectations from America were, he declined doing so, saying, “that the Doctor had grown too warm, and if he expressed his sentiments fully to him, it would only give him pain, which he would wish to avoid.” Here the matter dropped. It is not improbable that personal considerations may have had their influence, and thrown more asperity into this correspondence than there should have been. Governor Franklin, (the Doctor’s son,) had just been arrested on a charge of disaffection, and was now in custody. In curious contrast with this letter, are the intercepted despatches from Governor Franklin to Lord Dartmouth. He was most fervent in his loyalty.

† This was Sir Peter Parker’s fleet with Sir Henry Clinton and his troops on board.

From the following letters, in which his views are very fully and confidentially stated, it appears that the Adjutant-General, at an early period of the campaign, was of opinion with General Greene and others, though a minority of General Washington's military council, that the Island of New York should be evacuated, and the city burned. This, as the student of our history is aware, was the question considered, and decided in the negative about a month later, after the battle of Long Island. Yet the narrow and providential escape of the army in the retreat over the East River, in the first instance, and to the heights of Haerlem afterwards, justify the opinion that this counsel was the safest and most prudent.

TO MR. PETTIT.

Head-Quarters, August 4th.

I have received your letter written on your return from Monmouth. We have no doubt but there are persons, and some of them of note there, who are acting a very improper part, but we really do not know what to do with them. The General has sufficient employment for his time and attention with the army, and yet we find that committees are not to be depended on to execute business of this kind. They have their private connexions and partialities, which operate to the public injury. Even in this city, we every day see persons of the most dangerous character, but we are halting so much between civil and military, that nothing is done with them. I am very glad to find that the establishment of Government has so good an effect; it will strengthen and cement every day. Lord Howe's verbal declarations have been very strong for peace and accommodation,—but his written ones have been in a strain so different, and indeed they cautiously avoid entering into any particulars of the peace they so much desire, as convinces me (much against my inclination, I confess) that they have no serious intention of relinquishing one jot of their despotic claim over this country. I have always promoted the publication of all messages and letters. It is so necessary to have the concurrence of the people, that to keep them in the dark would offend them, whereas by submitting every thing that occurs to them, the measures taken in consequence seem to be their own, and secrecy gives birth to a thousand wild suspicions and conjectures.

An attack upon Staten Island was seriously thought of, but when it came to be executed we found we had neither men nor boats enough. The enemy is now so strengthened, that it cannot be thought of, as they have fortified not only some of the most commanding hills, but have a very large addition of men. One hundred sail have arrived within these ten days

and we have no doubt but a part or the whole of the foreign troops have arrived. We got a Nova Scotia paper, dated 2d July, from which it appears that a transport, with Hessians on board, had arrived there, and forty had passed. All these have since come to Staten Island. Though there seemed to be a general wish to strike some stroke on the Island, we observed that the troops were not fond of it, especially those in the Jerseys who were to have the greatest share, as it would not have been proper to leave this post naked. In short, it was what every body wished but few chose to execute. *My opinion is*, we should make it a war of posts, prolong, procrastinate, avoid any general action, or indeed any action, unless we have great advantages. If we can prevent their penetrating into the country, the possession of a small piece of ground covered by their shipping can be of little importance. If they do not strike a coup-de-main here, which I much apprehend, I should be for destroying the city and retiring when we cannot defend it longer. It is a mere point of honour which keeps us here now,—one great object, the communication of the North River, is over, and I confess I do not see the propriety of risking the fate of America, which will much depend on that of this army and its military stores, to defend a city, the greater part of whose inhabitants are plotting our destruction.* I do

* On the 5th of September, General Greene wrote to the Commander-in-chief: "I give it as my opinion that a general and speedy retreat is absolutely necessary, and that the honour and interest of Ameriea require it. I would burn the city and suburbs, and that for the following reasons. If the enemy gets possession of the city we never can recover possession of it without a superior naval force. It will deprive the enemy of an opportunity of barracking their whole army together, which if they could do it would be a very great security. It will deprive them of a general market,—the prices of things would prove a temptation to people to supply them for sake of gain, in direct violation to the laws of their country. All these advantages would result from the destruction of the city, and not one benefit can arise from its preservation that I can conceive. If the city once gets into their hands, it will be at their mercy either to save or destroy it, after they have made what use of it they think proper." So confident was Greene that his urgent advice would be taken, that writing to a friend about the same time, he says: "I think, from this manœuvre, the General proposes to retreat to Kingsbridge, and there make the grand stand. If this is the ease, *two to one New York is laid in ashes.*" (*Johnson's Greene*, vol. i. p. 56.) General Washington seems to have been of the same opinion, though the language of his despatches is more than usually cautious. "If we should be obliged to abandon the town, ought it to stand as winter-quarters for the enemy? They would derive great conveniences from it on the one hand, and much property would be destroyed on the other. It is an important question, but will admit of but little time for deliberation. At present, I dare say the enemy mean to preserve it if they can. If Congress therefore should resolve upon the destruction of it, the resolution should be a profound secret." On the 2d September the following resolution was adopted by Congress, and the project was relinquished, "Resolved,

not know whether I have yet told you that the difficulty of address is got over. General Howe has written to General Washington under that title, and agrees to exchange prisoners, in very polite terms. Our galleys have been up the river under the command of Tupper, and have engaged the men-of-war for an hour and a half; what damage they have done we do not know, but from the small distance they engaged, and the damage done the galleys, we suppose it must have been very considerable. We had two men killed, four mortally wounded, and fourteen otherwise wounded. Tupper's galley was hulled fourteen times. One Captain Grimes from Newport (who is a most gallant fellow) fought until his galley was half-leg deep in water, and was obliged to run her ashore to prevent her sinking. One gun split, but did no mischief. They are repairing, and propose to renew the attack in a few days. All accounts agree they behaved extremely well, particularly the two from Rhode Island.

TO MRS. REED.

New York, August 7th.

The enemy have received a reinforcement of one hundred sail within these ten days; they make a very formidable appearance. When I consider the force and preparations against us, I cannot but admire the spirit of the country, and the inequality of the contest. The whole world seems leagued against us. Enemies on every side, and no new friends arise. But our cause is just, and there is a Providence which directs and governs all things. We have no doubt that the troops lately arrived, are the foreigners, but whether all that are expected or not we cannot say. Our intelligence from Staten Island is very imperfect. It is a terrible thing that the militia of Pennsylvania are so impatient to go home; it will have the most discouraging and fatal consequences to this army and the cause.

that General Washington be acquainted that Congress would have special care taken in case he should find it necessary to quit New York, that no damage be done to the city by his troops on their leaving it, the Congress having no doubt of their being able to recover the same, though the enemy should for a time obtain possession of it." How excessive and mistaken this confidence was, was shown by the result. The British once in possession of New York, maintained it as a central position and depot, till the end of the war. The counsel of Greene and Reed, and the minority of the council of war, including as we infer, Washington himself, would have prevented this. On the other hand, the Colonists had much to apprehend from extremities. None of our cities, though each successively fell in the enemy's hands, were destroyed or injured. Had New York been burned in 1776, Philadelphia might have met the same fate in 1778.. As a mere point of military policy, however, the arguments in favour of burning the city are certainly plausible.

(Without date.)—"The late movement of the enemy is intended as a decisive one, and will prove so to this army if it is not baffled by the vigilance or defeated by the bravery of our troops. In either case, we shall still be able to support the contest, if the spirits of the people are not depressed by the unprosperous state of our affairs. We hear strange reports on this subject, but surely it must equal the most sanguine wishes of any person, to keep this great army at bay the whole summer, and prevent their overrunning the country. For my part, as I did not come here for honour, but to serve my country, I shall be well satisfied to return home under a temporary disgrace, if by bearing the reproach of the day, we can serve our country. We have not had any intelligence of the enemy's motions for a day or two: whether they mean an attack, or to surround and starve us out, is yet a doubt. They derive amazing advantage from their shipping. In truth they would not be half the enemy they are, if they were once separated from their ships."

August 9th.—"While our correspondence is yet open, I shall improve it; as writing to you, my dearest love, constitutes my greatest pleasure, next to hearing from you. Besides, the uncertainty how long it may continue, is another motive to enjoy it as fully as I can. I never felt more painful sensations than when I waked this morning from a most pleasing dream of peace and former domestic happiness, to a recollection of our present state, in which we have so much to apprehend; for upon the fate of this army, I take it, that of the country very much depends. I suppose you have heard before this time, that General Clinton is arrived from Carolina, with his army. One thousand Hessians were landed last Sunday, and the remainder which were left off the Banks of Newfoundland, are hourly expected. Clinton's coming was as unexpected to us as if he had dropped from the clouds, and was what I could never have believed, if we had it not confirmed to us by such proofs as to put it beyond all doubt. Three ships of war went off last evening, supposed to be going round Long Island, to cut off our communication with Connecticut by water. It is a wonder they have not done this before. It would have distressed us very much. The only way I can account for it is, that if they did this before they made their attack here, it might have induced us to remove from this spot where they certainly have more advantage of us than perhaps any other on the continent. I do not see how it is possible to prevent their having those places, when their men-of-war can come, and their—(illegible)—ships attend them; but how they will march into the country without carriages, horses, &c., I cannot conceive.

"While a decisive action is avoided, they can get no assistance of this kind, but what turn the people of this and perhaps some other provinces may take, in case of any misfortune here, it is hard to say; and what is of still more danger, it may depreciate the paper money, and then the army is gone. Bilious and putrid fevers, with the dysentery, have taken down a

great number of our men, which very much discourages those who remain. We expect some troops in from Maryland this evening, and expresses have gone every way for the militia. The arrival of troops in camp, has a prodigious effect upon the spirits of the others, and as we are well covered, if the men do their duty, I hope we may be able to prevent their driving us from hence, unless Providence should frown upon us very remarkably indeed. When I look down and see the prodigious fleet they have collected, the preparations they have made, and consider the vast expense, I cannot help being astonished that a people should come three thousand miles, at so much risk, trouble, and expense, to rob, plunder, and destroy, another people, because they will not lay their lives and fortunes at their feet. It is another proof of the pride of power and inflexible cruelty of the British nation. Providence, my dearest love, has cast our lot in a most unhappy period; but it is our duty to submit with patience to its dispensations, which, however dark and gloomy they may appear to us short-sighted mortals, are designed for wise and great purposes. Under this confidence, let us rest, trusting in his goodness who orders all things for the best, and humbly depending on him for strength to support and enable us to discharge our several duties with honour and fidelity."

August 13th.—“This goes by my brother Bowes, who goes to Philadelphia to take care of some papers of consequence, which the General chooses to have out of the way at this time. We continue pretty much in the same situation on both sides of the water, and I believe both in much suspense and anxiety as to the issue of the contest which must be near at hand. We are making every preparation, and have received very considerable strength within these few days. Near a hundred sail have been added to the enemy, bringing as we suppose, the remainder of the Hessians.”*

August 17th.—“Accounts of deserters and other intelligence inform us that a great many of the enemy’s troops have gone on board the transports, that three days’ provisions were cooked; in short, every step taken which indicated their leaving the Island. This morning General Putnam came up with an account that at least one-fourth of the fleet had sailed, but where we are at a loss to judge, or whether there may not be a mistake by their shifting their station. If they are really gone, one of two objects must be in view, either to go round Long Island and attempt to get above us in order to cut us off from the country, or proceed round to the Delaware. I do not know any measure they could take which would so effectually disconcert and injure us as the latter. All the men are drawn off here; the same of the military stores. I only comfort myself with the reflection that they have never yet done what their interest required, and I hope they have

* *Sparks's Washington*, iv. p. 45.

not hit upon it now for the first time. Our own traitors will, I fear, put them upon measures which otherwise they would not think of."

August 18th—To Mr. Pettit.—“The militia-men need no excuse to go home, their own humours furnish enough, and I expect that every indulgence by the officers will be perverted into a cause of dissatisfaction. Mr. Montgomery came to town yesterday, his battalion being ordered here. It is a very fine one, and well armed.*

“To our great surprise, yesterday a flag of truce appeared from the fleet, and who should be there but Lord Drummond. He delivered a sketch of propositions, as a basis of peace, accompanied by a letter from him to Lord Howe, importing that having in conversation found his Lordship much inclined to enter into negotiations upon such principles, he had sketched the outline, which he desired leave to communicate to us. Lord Howe’s answer permits him to do so, upon which he has begged leave from the General to go to Philadelphia upon the business, which the General refused, as he had broken his parole, but has forwarded all the papers to Congress.† The propositions do not materially differ from those of Lord North. General Howe has also asked permission for a Mr. Robert Temple to come on shore, which has been granted. The two men-of-war returned from their station up the river today, through the fire of our batteries, having been almost famished for want of water, and I believe much disappointed in the expectation they had of assistance from the Tories. The night before last, two fire-ships went up, one of which grappled the *Phœnix*, but the night being dark, she got to leeward, or nothing could have saved her; the other, on her passage across could not clear a tender which lay in the way, so that she grappled and burned her. Our men behaved with great spirit on the occasion, but the captain of the fire-ship which grappled the *Phœnix* is missing. We hope still to find him, as he behaved too well to go unrewarded.

“We are at a loss to say upon what grounds this pacific movement is made, whether the change of affairs in Europe, of which we have some account here, and which we suppose you have, has any share in it.‡ Delay, one would think, they would not seek, unless they are too fast for Burgoyne. In short we hardly know what to make of it. Lord Drummond does not seem to be a character of sufficient significance for such important business. Upon the whole, as I think no good will come of it, and our troops have arrived, I wish it had not happened. The militia in three days will want to go home.”

This impotent mission of Lord Drummond, appears to have

* This was a battalion from Chester.

† For particulars relative to Lord Drummond see *Sparks’s Washington*, vol. iii. pp. 228, 585.

‡ The foreign news was that of the change of the French ministry, on the retirement of Turgot, and the increased prospect of a continental war.

produced the effect which Colonel Reed apprehended, for on the next day but one the Commander-in-chief found it necessary to allude indirectly to it in general orders, and earnestly to guard against the influence of the current rumour that a reconciliation was contemplated. "The General," said the orders, "being informed that a report prevails, and is industriously spread far and wide, that Lord Howe has made propositions of peace, calculated by designing persons to lull us into a fatal security, his duty obliges him to declare that no such offer has been made by Lord Howe, but on the contrary, from the best intelligence he can procure, the army may expect an attack as soon as the wind and tide shall prove favourable. He hopes, therefore, that every man's mind and arms will be prepared for action, and when called to it, show our enemies, and the whole world, that freemen contending on their own land, are superior to any mercenaries on earth."

CHAPTER XI.

1776.

Landing of the British Army at Gravesend—Battle of Long Island—Colonel Atlee—Edward Hand—Retreat to New York—Letters to Mrs. Reed from New York Island—Gloom in the American camp—Washington's despatch to Congress, 2d September—Philadelphia soldiers.

THE uncertainty in the American camp was terminated by General Howe's landing a large body of troops at Gravesend on Long Island, on the 22d of August. Washington, on the day before, had received intelligence that such a movement was contemplated, and that a simultaneous attack by the army and fleet was to be made on the Island and on the city. On the 23d, Colonel Reed writes home:

To Mrs. Reed.—“ Yesterday General Howe landed a body of troops on Long Island, the number from five to eight thousand. As there were so many landing-places, and the people of the Island generally so treacherous, we never expected to prevent their landing, so that Colonel Hand, who was stationed nearest the landing-place, moved up immediately.* By our last accounts, they were about five miles from the ferry, and about three from our works on the Island. All the deserters say an attack will be also made here very soon, but we see no preparations. The greatest vigilance is had to prevent a surprise, which we have to fear more than any thing. About five thousand Connecticut militia have just come in, and more are arriving.”

* Edward Hand, one of the most gallant officers of the Revolution, was born at Clyduff, King's County, Ireland, 31st December, 1744; and came to America in 1774, as surgeon's mate to the Royal Irish Brigade. On resigning his post he entered anew on the practice of his profession in Pennsylvania. In the early part of 1776, he joined the American service as Colonel of one of the Pennsylvania regiments. He served throughout the war, was Adjutant-General, and Brigadier-General. No officer saw more active service. He died at Rockford in Lancaster County, 3d September, 1802. The author gratefully acknowledges his obligations to his surviving family, who have kindly furnished access to General Hand's very interesting papers.

24th.—“Since yesterday our troops have been skirmishing with the enemy on Long Island, with various fortune, but we have generally driven them back. Several were killed on both sides, but the numbers of ours not ascertained. Most of the Pennsylvania troops are ordered over. Our officers and men have behaved exceedingly well, and the whole army is in better spirits than I have known it at any time. The gallantry of the southern men has inspired all others, so that there will be an emulation who shall behave best. There is a wood between our works and the enemy's camp, of which each party is endeavouring to possess themselves; as yet we have kept it, and hope we shall, as it is very important. The enemy's ships are moving so much downwards, that we begin to think their grand attack will be on Long Island. Indeed, this place is now so strong, that in the present temper of the men, the enemy would lose half their army in attempting to take it.* One of our gunners yesterday threw a shell into a house of Mr. Axstill where a number of officers were at dinner, but we have not heard what damage it did. While I am writing there is a heavy firing, and clouds of smoke rising from the wood. General Putnam was made happy by obtaining leave to go over—the brave old man was quite miserable at being kept here.”

The details of the battle of Long Island need be but incidentally noticed here. It was the first conflict, beyond an intrenchment, between the inexperienced American troops and their veteran enemy. It was a conflict too of great numerical disparity, the British and Hessians exceeding by one half, their opponents. It was the first battle in which the Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland troops participated, and among them, as com-

* It was no part of the enemy's plan, as is now ascertained, to attempt to land any troops at New York, but from Lord Howe's official letter to the Admiralty, it appears he did intend by a threatened cannonade to make a diversion with his fleet. “Being informed,” says he, “the next day, (26th,) by General Howe of his intentions to advance that night to the enemy's lines, and of his wishes that some diversion might be attempted by the ships on this side, I gave direction to Sir Peter Parker for proceeding higher up in the channel toward the town of New York next morning, with the Asia, Renown, Preston, Roebuck, and Repulse, and to keep those ships in readiness for being employed as occasion might require; but the wind veering to the northward soon after the break of day, the ships could not be moved up to the distance proposed; therefore, when the corps under General Grant, forming the left column of the army, were seen to be engaged with the enemy in the morning, the Roebuck leading the detached squadron, was the only ship that could fetch high enough to the northward to exchange a few random shot with the battery on Red Hook, and the ebb making strongly down the river, soon after I ordered the signal to be shown for the squadron to anchor.”

posing General Sullivan's and Lord Stirling's commands, the severest slaughter occurred. No troops could have behaved more steadily than the battalions of Hand, Hazlitt, Miles, Atlee, Smallwood, and Williams, who were continually in action from the 23d to the 27th.* "The gallantry of the Southern men," as the Adjutant-General truly said, speaking of these regiments, "has inspired the whole army." It is very remarkable, with this palpable inequality of strength, that well-trained European troops, led by generals of large experience and unquestioned gallantry, should have been so long held at bay in an open field of battle, for such was the ground between Gravesend Bay and the lines at Brooklyn, by the untutored militia levies of the colonists. Yet so it was. General Howe's official letter to Lord George Germain shows with how much caution his troops were constrained to advance in the execution of the dexterous movement, by which the left flank of the Americans was turned, and how resolutely at every point the attack was resisted; and it is a theory in which the American military student may be pardoned for indulging, that had the pass by the Bedford Road been guarded as it should have been, and General Washington felt justified in leaving New York defenceless and thrown all his troops on the Island, a different and less disastrous result would have ensued. But to return to our narrative.

On the 26th, Washington crossed over to Brooklyn. The Adjutant-General accompanied him and remained at his side till the retreat to New York was effected. The intense solicitude of the American General and his council, on the night of the 26th, has been often described. No one could tell from the partial skirmishing of the day before, how the militia would stand the attack, which was seen to be inevitable. It was impossible to conjecture what effect might be produced on those within the intrenchments, if the troops without should be driven

* It may here be noticed that by the Adjutant-General's return about this time, the rank and file of the American army fit for duty, was 7389 men, of whom nearly one-third, or 2063, were Pennsylvania soldiers.—*American Archives*, vi. 1119.

in, or in a panic, to which inexperienced troops are so liable, retreat without resistance. All these sources of deep and reasonable anxiety were open, and yet Washington acted as if in command of veteran troops whose resolution he had tried, and disposed his men, throwing the Southern troops, who had never been in action, in advance, and evincing no want of confidence in the recruits on whom he had to rely. Colonel Reed shared the anxieties of that eventful night. There was for him peculiar solicitude. All his Pennsylvania friends, every Pennsylvania regiment except Shee's and Magaw's still at Kingsbridge, were stationed in advance. Colonel Hand's rifle regiment had been in continual action with the enemy since the 22d. Atlee's, Kichline's, and De Haas' battalions were nearest the enemy, and who, in his inexperience could tell whether the next day was to be one of honour or infamy, of bloody victory or bloodier defeat. In one particular, the Americans were grievously misled. They did not dream, whilst all their thoughts, their hopes, and fears were directed to what was believed to be the main body of the enemy in front, that Sir Henry Clinton, with the right wing of the British army, was approaching within a few miles, in another direction, and was waiting for the next day's cannonade as his signal to advance.

The events of that day have been often described. The action began before daybreak, and by noon the rout of the Americans was complete. Sullivan and Lord Stirling were made prisoners, their gallant soldiers, the regiments just enumerated, being dispersed, many of them cut to pieces or captured, and the three divisions of the British army were masters of a field which had cost them dearly, and every foot of which had been disputed with desperate valour. By General Howe's official account upwards of three hundred of his best troops were killed and wounded.

Among the troops stationed on the right of the American advance, was a regiment of Pennsylvanians commanded by Colonel Samuel Atlee. His original manuscript of the occurrences of this day is in my possession. It is a soldier's unaffected narrative, and reflects great credit on him, and his gallant advance party of Pennsylvania soldiers. After an obstinate en-

gagement with General Grant's division on the river road, Atlee's corps was dispersed or cut to pieces, and he captured.

It was after Atlee's capture, that Lord Stirling, on his retreat towards the lines, fell in with, and attacked Lord Cornwallis's division at the Yellow Mills, thus covering the retreat of the remnant of Haslet's Delaware regiment, and for a moment turning the current of the fight. The heroes of this last exploit were Smallwood's Maryland troops, under the command of Major Gist, more than two hundred and fifty of whom perished in the attack on Cornwallis's Grenadiers, within sight of the lines at Brooklyn, and here it was that Lord Stirling surrendered himself to the Hessian General De Hiester.*

Washington witnessed, with ill-disguised agitation, the discomfiture and slaughter of his favourite troops, being unable by any adequate reinforcement to aid or rescue them. The three divisions of the enemy concentrating under the eye of the British Commander-in-chief were now within a few hundred yards of the American redoubts, and the day being far spent, no alternative remained to Washington but to offer a determined front to the victors, and, calling in the troops in reserve on New York Island, with the scattered survivors of this day of disaster, to stake the fate of his whole army on a desperate attempt to resist the British storming parties, should they advance. The assault was relinquished by the British General,† and ano-

* *Duer's Life of Lord Stirling*, p. 162.—General Howe in his despatch to the Minister, states his total loss (killed, wounded, and missing) at about three hundred. Of these it would seem from examining the regimental returns that more than two hundred belonged to the various corps opposed to Lord Stirling's division, viz., those of Lord Cornwallis and General Grant. The loss of the latter was especially severe. It was General Grant, who, in the House of Commons, on the 2d of February 1775, in a debate on the London Petition, had said, "he had served in America,—knew the Americans very well, was certain they would not fight, they would never dare to face an English army, and did not possess any of the qualifications necessary to make a good soldier."—*Parliamentary Register*, vol. i. p. 135.

† *Almon's Remembrancer*, part iii. 1776, p. 347. After turning the American left, and in fact surrounding the greater portion of the troops, the British grenadiers arrived within musket-shot of the lines at Brooklyn. "Such," says Sir W. Howe, "was the eagerness to attack the redoubt, that it required repeated orders to prevail upon them to desist from the attempt. Had they been permitted to go on, it is my opinion they would have carried the redoubt, but as it was apparent

ther night of deeper solicitude closed upon the Americans, now confined within the narrow limits of the Brooklyn lines. Expresses were despatched to General Mifflin at Kingsbridge to repair to Camp, and on the morning of the 28th, the two Pennsylvania regiments of Shee and Magaw, and Colonel Glover's from Marblehead, crossed the ferry, and joined the camp at Brooklyn. As late as eight o'clock, on the 27th, Washington had formed a very accurate judgment of the designs of the enemy, and that they designed by regular approaches and the co-operation of the fleet, rather than by assault, to attempt to carry his works: but the crossing of the additional troops, and the following hurried letter from the Adjutant-General, show that on the next day he still adhered to his intention to risk a battle at his intrenchments, and that the idea of a retreat was not then entertained.*

TO MRS. REED.

Long Island, 29th August, 1776.

I wrote you yesterday,† but as every day must be an anxious one in our present situation, I just sit down this morning to tell you that I am alive, and well, though terribly fatigued, having been riding all day and obliged to lie in my clothes. The enemy made no approach yesterday except by a

the lines must have been ours at a very cheap rate by regular approaches, I would not risk the loss that might have been sustained in the assault, and ordered them back to a hollow way in the front of the works, out of the reach of musketry." How far the British general was influenced in his decision, by the previous slaughter of the day, and by the recollection of the rate at which the far less formidable intrenchments at Bunker Hill had been taken, it is impossible to say. It was a favourite ground of complaint by Galloway and other enemies of the Howes that this assault was not permitted, or that some better reason was not given for its omission. Yet there can be no doubt it was the decision of prudence. Captain Montresor, in his examination before a Parliamentary committee in 1779, said, "I was present when Sir W. Howe called off the troops;—it would have been improper to have suffered them to storm the redoubt; the artillery was not up, no fascines to fill the ditches, no axes for cutting the abattis, no scaling-ladders or proper apparatus for the assault of so respectable a work. The rebel works were judiciously planned, but ill executed."

* A very spirited account of the affair on Long Island was published a few years ago by my accomplished friend, Samuel Ward, of New York.

† This letter is lost.

random fire, but our army has been kept up so long, and a most unfortunate rain yesterday has had a very unfortunate effect on their minds, bodies, and arms. However, we hope to be able to make a good stand, as our lines are pretty strong. They are intrenching at a small distance. Our situation is truly critical, but with the blessing of Heaven I hope we shall do well. My brother is well. I saw him last evening in the lines. Adieu, God bless you, and all about you.

P. S. Do not be uneasy if I do not write every day, as sometimes it may be impossible, and yet I may be well. General Parsons has got in, as well as many men missing since the battle on Tuesday, but it must be allowed to have been severe to us, and I believe as much so to the enemy, who have lost a great number both of officers and men. No account yet of Colonel Atlee or Major Byrd.

The heavy rain of the 28th had its effect on both armies, and whilst it distressed the fatigued and unprotected troops within the lines, retarded the operations of the intrenching parties of the enemy. Nothing occurred during the day except occasional and sometimes severe skirmishing between the outposts. The rain was succeeded on the 29th by a fog on the Island, so dense that objects could not be discerned at a few yards' distance, whilst at New York and in the lower part of the harbour, the atmosphere was comparatively clear. After his last letter was written, Colonel Reed, in company with Mifflin, who had arrived the day before in camp, and Colonel William Grayson of Virginia, one of Washington's Aids, rode to the outposts at the western extremity of the lines, in the neighbourhood of Red Hook, where there was a small battery, which had suffered severely from the cannonade of the Roebuck during the action of the 27th. Whilst there, the fog, which lay heavily over this part of the harbour, was lifted by a shift of wind, and the British fleet, lying at its anchorage off Staten Island and within the Narrows, could be plainly seen. It was apparent that some movement was in contemplation; boats were passing to and from the Admiral's ship, and the three officers could not doubt that on the change of tide, if the wind held, and the fog cleared off, the fleet would come up, and silencing the feeble batteries at Red Hook and New York, anchor in the East River, and thus completely surround the American army. There could be no hesitation in view of this

impending danger as to what should be done, and it was determined that the three officers should at once return to General Washington's quarters, and urge the immediate withdrawal of the army. They had reason to believe that this counsel would not be acceptable, and that the Commander-in-chief desired to try the fortune of war once more in his present position. Colonel Reed, as the most intimate, and from his official relation the most entitled to respect, was fixed on as the one to suggest the movement, his companions agreeing if necessary to support him. On their return to head-quarters, a messenger informed the Adjutant-General that Colonel Shee, whose regiment was stationed at the extreme left near the Wallabout, desired to confer with him. On repairing thither he learned what was the prevalent impression among the officers, and how little dependence could be placed on the militia, such was their despondency produced by exposure and disaster. The Adjutant-General with his two friends hastened to Washington's quarters, and after a free and friendly interchange of opinions, the council of war was called, and the unanimous decision formed, that at any hazard the army should attempt to recross the ferry, and retreat to the main land.*

* For the above particulars I am indebted to Graydon's Memoirs, the Washington Correspondence, and such traditionary information as has reached me. Judge Marshall confirms the view here taken, that a change of plans was produced by the discovery of a contemplated movement by the fleet.—*Life of Washington*, vol. i. 93. The following letter also has peculiar interest from the circumstances under which it was written. It is addressed to the author.

Red Hook, (Duchess Co.) 27th March, 1843.

DEAR SIR,

You wish to know what share General Reed had in the operations on Long Island in 1776. What information I have on the subject I derived from Colonel Grayson, one of the aids-de-camp of General Washington. A few years after the termination of the war I met Colonel Grayson in Congress, of which he was then a member from the state of Virginia. We were on terms of frequent and friendly intercourse, and often in conversation reverted to the incidents of the various campaigns in which we had respectively taken part. From him I learned that General Reed, then Adjutant-General, was in the action of the 27th August, the result of which as you well know was not favourable to our arms. General Washington was disposed to renew the conflict if necessary, to maintain his post, and for that purpose had called to his aid from Fort Washington two additional regiments, Shee's and Magaw's. But notwithstanding the reinforcement,

About eight o'clock in the evening the regiments were silently paraded in order as was pretended to make an attack on the enemy. In the mean time the embarkation began under the superintendence of General McDougall, and in the course of the night and early in the morning of the 30th, the fog still continuing, the regiments were successively embarked, and by six o'clock the whole army, amounting to about nine thousand men, was safely landed in New York, leaving to the enemy the heavy artillery, which could not be transported in the boats that happened to be at hand. Mifflin with his Pennsylvania battalions and the remnant of Smallwood's and Haslet's formed the covering party. Washington with his staff and the Adjutant-General were on horseback the whole night, and never left the ferry stairs at Brooklyn, till they had seen the whole of the troops embarked.

The following narrative of some of the incidents of this eventful night is taken from a paper in the handwriting of Colonel Hand, and has never before been published :

"In the evening of the 29th of August, 1776, with several other commanding officers of corps, I received orders to attend Major-General Mifflin. When assembled, General Mifflin informed us that in consequence of the determination of a board of general officers, the evacuation of Long Island, where we then were, was to be attempted that night; that the Commander-in-chief had honoured him with the command of the covering party, and

General Reed had no confidence in the ability of the American forces to maintain their position, and conferring with Mifflin and Grayson, he found their opinions to accord with his own. Having ascertained that a change of wind, which had occurred during the night, would enable the British fleet in a few hours to ascend the river and cut off all communication between Brooklyn and the opposite shore, they all then hastened to General Washington, and urged upon him the necessity of an immediate retreat. The result was a council of war, and the unanimous adoption of the measure proposed. Very truly and respectfully yours,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

P. S. DEAR SIR,—My father is too ill to hold a pen, and above is a letter written under his dictation, and to which by his desire I have appended his signature. It grieves me to be obliged to add that his health, though gradually, is visibly declining, and that no hope of his recovery is now entertained, either by himself or the members of his family. Truly yours,

JOHN ARMSTRONG, JR.

General Armstrong died three days after, aged eighty-four.

that our corps were to be employed in that service; he then assigned us our several stations, which we were to occupy as soon as it was dark, and pointed out Brooklyn Church as an alarm-post to which the whole were to repair, and unitedly oppose the enemy in case they discovered our movements and made an attack in consequence. My regiment was posted in a redoubt on the left, and in the lines on the right of the great road below Brooklyn Church. Captain Henry Miller commanded in the redoubt. Part of a regiment of the flying camp of the state of New York were in the beginning of the night posted near me; they showed so much uneasiness at their situation that I petitioned General Mifflin to suffer them to march off, lest they might communicate the panic with which they were seized, to my people; the General granted my request, and they marched off accordingly. After that, nothing remarkable happened at my post till about two o'clock in the morning, when Alexander Scammell, since Adjutant-General, who that day acted as aid-de-camp to the Commander-in-chief, came from the left inquiring for General Mifflin, who happened to be with me at the time. Scammell told him that the boats were waiting, and the Commander-in-chief anxious for the arrival of the troops at the ferry. General Mifflin said he thought he must be mistaken, that he did not imagine the General could mean the troops he immediately commanded. Scammell replied he was not mistaken, adding that he came from the extreme left, had ordered all the troops he had met to march, that in consequence they were then in motion, and that he would go on to give the same orders. General Mifflin then ordered me to call my advanced picquets and sentinels, to collect and form my regiment, and to march as soon as possible, and quitted me. Having marched into the great road leading to the church, I fell in with the troops returning from the left of the lines; having arrived at the church I halted to take up my camp equipage, which in the course of the night I had carried there by a small party. General Mifflin came up at the instant, and asked the reason of the halt. I told him, and he seemed very much displeased, and exclaimed, 'D—n your pots and kettles! I wish the devil had them! March on.' I obeyed, but had not gone far before I perceived the front had halted, and hastening to inquire the cause, I met the Commander-in-chief, who perceived me and said, 'Is not that Colonel Hand?' I answered in the affirmative.* His Excellency said he was surprised at me in particular, that he did not expect I would have abandoned my post. I answered that I had not abandoned it, that I had marched by order of my immediate commanding officer; he said it was impossible. I told him I hoped, if I could satisfy him

* In one of the latest and most popular British histories of the war, "Knight's Pictorial History of the Reign of George III., p. 273," the reader will detect a number of perverse misstatements of fact, and no one more wilful, and in the face of all evidence, than that during the retreat Washington "kept his own person safe in New York." Such inaccuracies are mischievous and utterly unworthy of British authorship.

I had the orders of General Mifflin, he would not think me particularly to blame. He said he undoubtedly would not. General Mifflin just then coming up, and asking what the matter was, his Excellency said, ‘Good God ! General Mifflin, I am afraid you have ruined us by so unseasonably withdrawing the troops from the lines.’ General Mifflin replied with some warmth, ‘I did it by your order.’ His Excellency declared it could not be. General Mifflin swore ‘By God, I did,’ and asked, ‘Did Scammell act as an aid-de-camp for the day or did he not?’ His Excellency acknowledged he did. ‘Then,’ said Mifflin, ‘I had orders through him.’ The General replied it was a dreadful mistake, and informed him that matters were in much confusion at the ferry, and unless we could resume our posts before the enemy discovered we had left them, in all probability the most disagreeable consequences would follow. We immediately returned, and had the good fortune to recover our former stations and keep them for some hours longer without the enemy perceiving what was going forward.”

At four o’clock, about daylight, the British engineer officers had the first intelligence of the evacuation, though only at a few hundred yards’ distance, and in less than half an hour the troops were under arms. Captain Montresor with a small party first crossed the crest of the works, and found the camp deserted. The advanced parties arrived at the ferry just as the last boat-load of the Americans had passed out of musket range.

The effect of the disasters of the last few days on the spirits of the militia was such as might be expected. It was a depression amounting to absolute dismay, nor did Washington during his military career, ever pen a despatch of a more melancholy tenor than that which on the day but one after the retreat, he wrote to Congress, “Our situation is truly distressing. The check our detachment sustained on the 27th has dispirited a great proportion of our troops, and filled their minds with apprehension and despair. The militia, instead of calling forth their utmost efforts to a brave and manly opposition in order to repair our losses, are dismayed, intractable, and impatient to return. Great numbers have gone off; in some instances almost by whole regiments, by half ones, and by companies at a time. This circumstance of itself, independent of others, when fronted by a well-appointed enemy, superior in numbers to our whole collected force, would be sufficiently disagreeable; but when their example has infected

another part of the army, when their want of discipline and refusal of almost every kind of restraint and government have produced a like conduct but too common to the whole, and an entire disregard of that order and subordination, necessary to the well-doing of an army, and which had been inculcated before, as well as the nature of our military establishment would admit of, our condition becomes still more alarming ; and with the deepest concern, I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops. — Till of late, I had no doubt in my own mind, of defending this place ; nor should I have yet, if the men would do their duty,—but this I despair of." The truth was, and it was ill disguised in his letters, that in the slaughter and dispersion of that part of his troops which had borne the brunt of the battle on Long Island, Washington felt that his available strength was materially and as he feared, hopelessly weakened.

On the 2d September, the same day on which Washington thus wrote to Congress, Colonel Reed again wrote from New York.

New York, September 2, 1776.

To Mrs. Reed.—“I have only time to say I am alive and well,—as to spirits but middling. The justice of our cause, the hope of success, and every other circumstance that can enliven us, must be put into the scale against those of a contrary kind, which I allow to be serious. I hope you will endeavour cheerfully to submit to the dispensations of Providence, whatever they may be. My honour, duty, and every other tie held sacred among men, call upon me to proceed with firmness and resolution, and I trust that neither you nor my children will have reason to be ashamed of my conduct. Walking in this path I am sure I am right, and having done this, the event must be left to the great Disposer of events. My country will I trust yet be free, whatever may be our fate who are cooped up, or are in danger of being so, on this tongue of land, where we ought never to have been.”

September 6th.—“I have written twice this week, but whether my letters ever reach you or not I do not know. I hope they do, as they will serve to keep up your spirits in our critical situation. We are still here, in a posture somewhat awkward ;—we think, (at least I do,) that we cannot stay, and yet we do not know how to go, so that we may be properly said to be between hawk and buzzard. To attempt a description of all the circumstances which attend us would take more time than I can spare, nor would it give you any great consolation. Our comfort is, that the season is

far advanced, and if a sacrifice of us can save the cause of America, there will be time to collect another army before spring, and the country be preserved. The councils of the Congress seem to be dark and intricate, and very badly calculated to raise or continue an army from which substantial benefit can be derived. My sensations are too acute and forebodings too strong for such a service, though I do not find my spirits sink under difficulties, but rather rise. I sometimes think my mind is a very peculiar one; it rises when the spirits of others fall, and suffers by anticipating evil. To use the modern phrase, I have made it up for whatever may happen, and feel no other concern than what arises from thoughts of you and our dear little folks, and even these I get rid of as soon as possible, for it can only unfit me for duty without doing you any service. When I look round, and see how few of the numbers who talked so largely of death and honour are around me, and that those who are here are those from whom it was least expected, (as the Tilghmans, &c.,) I am lost in wonder and surprise.* Some of our Philadelphia gentlemen who came over on visits, upon the first cannon, went off in a most violent hurry. Your noisy sons of liberty are, I find, the quietest in the field. The motions of the enemy are very dark and mysterious. Such another surprise would do us much mischief. I send a list of such officers as have sent out for their baggage, and are certainly prisoners. I suppose there are others whom we shall hear of soon. I am glad Atlee is safe, because every body allows he behaved well. An engagement, or even the expectation of one, gives a wonderful insight into character. But we are young soldiers."

* I am unable to say whether more than one of the Tilghman family is here alluded to. Tench Tilghman, the son of Mr. James Tilghman, and brother of Chief Justice William Tilghman, a Philadelphian by family and residence, had been one of the first volunteers to join the army. In August, 1776, he became a member of General Washington's family, and was his confidential aid throughout the war. Speaking of him in 1781, Washington said, "He has been in every action in which the main army was concerned. He has been a zealous servant and slave to the public, and a faithful assistant to me for nearly five years, a great part of which time he refused to receive pay." (*Sparks's Washington*, viii. 38.) He died at Baltimore in 1786, (Id. ix. 168.) Among the Morris MSS. is a series of extremely interesting letters from Colonel Tilghman.

CHAPTER XII.

1776.

Lord Howe's attempt at Negotiation — Message to Congress — Interview on Staten Island—Plans of campaign—Contemplated destruction of New York —Greene and Reed's counsel—Landing of the British—Evacuation of New York—Skirmish of September 16—Death of Knowlton and Leitch—Fire in New York—Heights of Haerlem—Doctor Gordon—Letter to Member of Congress—Disorganization of New England Troops—Letters to Mrs. Reed—Battle of Chatterton's Hill and Whiteplains—Investiture of Fort Washington.

WHILST gloom and perplexity thus rested on the camp of the Americans, and no one was able to form a conjecture as to the issue of each day, or to determine what course it was prudent to pursue, the British commanders made a new and most unexpected effort at accommodation. General Sullivan was permitted to visit Philadelphia on his parole, and was the bearer of a message from Lord Howe, desiring an informal conference with that body. Various motives may have led to this step. That to which it has been usually attributed, and which no doubt had its influence, was the hope that the recent disaster on Long Island might have depressed and weakened the confidence of Congress and the people. The British Admiral, whose kind feelings it is not at all reasonable to question, felt a natural solicitude to avoid the further effusion of blood. But beside this, no one can doubt that the gallantry of the Americans in the affair of the 27th, the skill displayed in the retreat, and the bold front now assumed, had satisfied the British General that the Colonists were not the contemptible enemies they had been represented. Lord Howe had no means of knowing the actual state of things within the American camp. Sullivan's message, as is well known, occasioned great embarrassment to Congress. For several days it was the

subject of the most animated discussion. To accede to the interview seemed to cast a doubt on the certainty of Independence. To decline it involved the danger of alienating a portion of those who yet hesitated, and whose hearty co-operation was much to be desired. The point of form, about which there had been so much difficulty, was dexterously waived, for Lord Howe in asserting his determination to receive no deputation that Congress might send, except as private gentlemen, expressly said that he meant also to waive his own rank and official station, and meet them "*himself simply as a private gentleman,*" and at any place they might appoint.

Of the debates in Congress we have no account, except that John Adams—and we may easily imagine who generally agreed with him,—earnestly opposed the plan of an interview. There was one consideration, however, as we may infer, which had great weight. There was a prevalent impression that Lord Howe had other authority than that which he had in public admitted, or which he might be willing in writing to acknowledge himself to be clothed with. What were his powers exactly was not known in England before he sailed, and General Conway's motion in the House of Commons for a copy of the instructions had been rejected by a decisive majority.*

The attractive word "*compact*" was used in the message to Congress. There was in this, at least by implication, a promise of something like a contract between powers *de facto* independent, and an express admission that in a possible state of things the authority of Congress might be recognised. It is by

* Referring at a later period (March, 1777) to this negotiation, Colonel Tilghman wrote from head-quarters to Mr. Morris, "You very well know that the disaffected in the Province of Pennsylvania chiefly have ever held up an argument to the people, that had not Congress from the beginning shown a greater disposition for war than peace, matters had never gone to the lengths they have. And you also may remember what an amazing influence their doctrines had, until a deputation of Congress met Lord and General Howe at Staten Island, and obliged them to confess they had no powers beyond those expressed in the act of Parliament. From that time to this they have been pretty silent," &c. (MS.)

In Mr. Adams's letter to his wife, 14th Sept. 1776, he says, after describing the interview, "Its result will do no disservice to us. It is now plain that his Lordship has no power but what is given by the Act of Parliament."—*John Adams's Letters*, vol. i. p. 165.

no means to be wondered at, that Congress, at last, though under most elaborate protest, consented to the interview. On the 6th of September, Franklin, Adams and Rutledge were chosen as the envoys. On the 11th, the committee arrived at Amboy, and found Lord Howe's boat waiting to convey them to Staten Island, where the interview was to take place. A British officer of rank was in the boat, sent in order to remain as a hostage within the American lines. This ceremonious precaution was at once declined by the committee.

The circumstances of the interview, and its result, are familiar to the student of our Revolutionary story. It failed entirely. The scene of neighbouring war, the attempt to reconcile the wide differences of two armed and exasperated nations, was in strange contrast with the friendly negotiations attempted two years before, in the drawing-rooms of London, over Mrs. Howe's chess-board. It must have been painfully felt by the British Admiral as well as by Dr. Franklin.*

Whilst this attempt at accommodation was in progress, Washington convoked a military council to determine on the best course to be pursued with his dispirited army. He had no confidence in the success of General Sullivan's mission, and disapproved of the manner in which it was conducted, thinking that all communications of the sort should be made to Congress through him as commander of its armies. The majority of his first council of war was in favour of retaining the city at all hazards, though the minority, headed by General Greene, whose advice was most earnestly given, could scarcely be brought to acquiesce—and in a day or two, first a compromise was agreed to, by which a portion of the army was withdrawn to Kingsbridge; and finally on the 12th it was deter-

* See *Sparks's Franklin*, vol. v. p. 829. Sir John Barrow in his Life of Howe, attributes the failure of the interview at Staten Island to the stubborn refusal of the Americans to confer unless they were recognised officially. This was not so. The point was evaded discreetly, and Lord Howe's propositions were fairly heard and discussed with great candour and courtesy on both sides. Lord Howe's account of the interview, in a despatch to Lord George Germain will be found in *The Parliamentary Register*, vol. viii. p. 249.

mined, with but three or four dissentient voices, wholly to evacuate the city.* At this time the enemy's lines extended along Long Island far above the northern extremity of the American works, whilst their men-of-war and boats, passing the batteries with impunity, were lying in the East River and Flushing Bay, ready at any moment to secure a landing of the troops.

On the 14th, a few days after the interview on Staten Island, Colonel Reed writes:—

TO MRS. REED.

New York, September 14, 1776.

"The enemy are evidently intending to encompass us on this Island by a grand military exertion, which if successful must immortalise the name of Howe, to get this whole army and its stores in their power. I hope they will fail. It is now a trial of skill whether they shall or not, and every night we lie down with the most anxious fears for the fate of to-morrow. My own personal safety is not regarded further than as respects you and our dear children,—if my life would render any essential service to my country, I would cheerfully lay it down. I am called away. Ever yours, &c.

"P. S. My baggage is all at Kingsbridge. We expect to remove thither this evening. I mean our Head-Quarters."

* Greene, as we have seen, was in favour of destroying the city. There is among the Morris MSS. a letter from John Jay dated 6th October, 1776, at Fish Kill, in which the following remarkable passage occurs:

"Had I been vested with absolute power in this state, I have often said and still think that I would last spring have desolated all Long Island, Staten Island, the city and county of New York, and all that part of the county of West Chester which lies below the mountains. I would then have stationed the main body of the army in the mountains on the East, and eight or ten thousand men in the Highlands on the west side of the river. I would have directed the river at Fort Montgomery, which is nearly at the southern extremity of the mountains, to be so shallowed as to afford only depth sufficient for an Albany sloop, and all the southern passes and defiles in the mountains to be strongly fortified. Nor do I think the shallowing of the river a romantic scheme. Rocky mountains rise immediately from the shores. The breadth is not very great, though the depth is. But what cannot eight or ten thousand men well worked effect. According to this plan of defence the state would be absolutely impregnable against all the world on the sea side, and would have nothing to fear except from the way of the Lake. Should the enemy gain the river, even below the mountains, I think I foresee that a retreat would become necessary, and I can't forbear wishing that a desire of saving a few acres may not lead us into difficulties."—(MS.)

September 15th.—“I wrote you yesterday, and have little now to add but that I continue well, though under the greatest anxiety of mind and fatigue of body. Yesterday’s post brought me your dear favour. What shall I say to your request of my coming to you on an expected event. Heaven is my witness that so strong is my affection, and so powerful my wishes that were I to give way to them, all other considerations would vanish; but such a step would not only affect myself but the public. If I, who have spoken so vehemently against officers and men running home in time of danger, should myself do it, the example would have the most fatal consequences, and I fear make my whole future life uneasy. In so distressing a situation, I do not know what to say or determine. When I look round and see how many have gone home whose situation and family and circumstances would so much better have permitted them to remain, I cannot but think I have done more than I ought to have done. But I can truly say I have acted solely on public views, and let the issue of our contest be what it may, I cannot charge myself with having failed in any part of my duty at such a crisis.”

Colonel Reed’s letter, describing the final evacuation of New York, is lost. On the landing of the British troops at Kip’s Bay, Washington describes the two Connecticut brigades as running away without firing a single shot, and General Greene, in a letter to a friend, says, “We made a miserable, disorderly retreat from New York, owing to the conduct of the militia, who ran at the appearance of the enemy’s advanced guard. Fellow’s and Parson’s brigades ran away from about fifty men, and left his Excellency on the ground within eighty yards of the enemy, so vexed at the infamous conduct of his troops, that he sought death rather than life.”

“I wrote you,” says Colonel Reed, writing from the Heights near Kingsbridge, “yesterday, giving you an account of our leaving New York. This had been determined on several days ago, but the removal of the sick and many other circumstances prevented its being done with that expedition it ought to have been. Had the landing of the enemy been delayed one day longer, we should have left them the city. But an unfortunate idea took possession of the minds of some of our northern generals that it might be defended, or at least that some considerable opposition might be made to the landing. They undertook it, permitted the enemy to land without giving one fire, could never be formed, but were driven in by one-tenth of their numbers.”

On the next day, however, the spirits of the army were raised by an exploit of another portion of the Connecticut troops, and one of the Virginia regiments. Skirmish as it

was, for it can scarcely be called a battle, it produced, as is apparent from all the correspondence of the time, great exhilaration throughout the army. Colonel Reed, who had an active share in the engagement, and in whose arms the gallant Knowlton breathed his last, thus describes it.

TO MRS. REED.

I have just received yours of the 20th, by which I imagine one of mine, written the day after the engagement of the 17th, had not yet come to hand, wherein I gave you the particulars, which I was able to do better than almost any other person, as I happened to be in it when it began, and assisted in calling off our troops when they had pursued the enemy as far as was thought proper. It hardly deserves the name of a battle, but as it was a scene so different from what had happened the day before, it elevated the spirits of our troops, and in that respect has been of great service. It would take up too much time and paper to go into a minute description of the whole affair. The substance of it is this. Just after I had sealed my letter to you, and sent it away, an account came that the enemy were advancing upon us in three large columns. We have so many false reports, that I desired the General to permit me to go and discover what truth there was in the account. I went down to our most advanced post, and while talking there with the officer of the guard, the enemy's advanced guard fired upon us at about fifty yards' distance—our men behaved well, stood, and returned the fire, till overpowered by numbers, they were obliged to retreat. The enemy advanced upon us very fast. I had not quitted the house five minutes before they were in possession of it. Finding how things were, I went over to the General to get some support for the brave fellows who had behaved so well. By the time I got there, the enemy appeared in open view and sounded their bugles in a most insulting manner, as is usual after a fox chase. I never felt such a sensation before—it seemed to crown our disgrace. The General was prevailed upon to order out a party to attack them, and as I had been upon the ground, which no one else had, it fell to me to conduct them. They were Virginia troops, commanded by a brave officer, Major Leitch. I accordingly went with them, but was unhappily thwarted in my scheme by some persons calling to the troops and taking them out of the way I intended. In a few minutes our brave fellows mounted up the rocks, and attacked the enemy with great spirit. At the same time some of our troops, in another quarter, moved up towards the enemy, and the action began. Major Leitch fell near me, in a few minutes, with three balls through

him, but he is likely to do well.* Colonel Knowlton, a brave Connecticut officer, also fell mortally wounded. I mounted him on my horse and brought him off. In about ten minutes, our people pressing on with great ardour, the enemy gave way and left us the ground, which was strewed pretty thick with dead, chiefly the enemy, though it since turns out our loss is also considerable. Our greatest loss is poor Knowlton, whose name and spirit ought to be immortal. I assisted him off, and when gasping in the agonies of death, all his inquiry was if we had driven in the enemy. The pursuit of a flying enemy was so new a scene that it was with difficulty our men could be brought to retreat, which they did in very good order. We buried the dead, and brought off the wounded on both sides, as far as our troops had pursued. We have since learned that the main body of the enemy was hastily advancing, so that in all probability there would have been a reverse of things if the pursuit had not been given over.

You can hardly conceive the change it has made in our army. The men have recovered their spirits and feel a confidence which before they had quite lost. I hope the effects will be lasting. You will probably hear from other quarters, of the double escape I had. My own horse not being at hand when the alarm was first given, I borrowed one from a young Philadelphian. He received a shot just behind his fore-shoulder, which narrowly missed my leg. I am told he is since dead; but the greatest was from one of our own rascals, who was running away. Upon my driving him back he presented his piece and snapped it at me at about a rod distance. I seized a musket from another soldier, and snapped at him; he had the same good luck. He has since been tried, and is now under sentence of death, but I believe I must beg him off, as after I found I could not get the gun off, I wounded him on the head, and cut off his thumb with my hanger. I suppose many persons will think it was rash and imprudent in officers of our rank to go into such an action. General Putnam, General Greene, many of the General's family, Mr. Tilghman, &c., were in it, but it was really to animate the troops, who were quite dispirited, and would not go into danger unless their officers led the way.

Our situation is very much the same that it was. We are fortifying ground naturally strong. The enemy lie about three miles from us. They have been very busy bringing over cannon, &c., from Long Island, but we cannot learn what they intend. The night before last there was a most dread-

* He died soon after the action. An account of this skirmish will be found in *Dr. Lushington's Life of Lord Harris*, p. 79. General Harris, the conqueror of Seringapatam, was then a Captain in the 5th Regiment. A number of distinguished British military and naval officers had their apprenticeship in the disasters of the American war. Among others Lord Exmouth (then Lieutenant Pellew, R.N.), was with Burgoyne at the time of his surrender, in 1777. His biographer gives a spirited narrative of his adventures on the northern frontier.—*Oastler's Life of Lord Exmouth*.

ful fire in the city, but how it happened we are quite at a loss. There was a resolve in Congress against our injuring it—so that we neither set it on fire or made any preparations for the purpose. Though I make no doubt it will be charged to us.*

After the army took the field, on the evacuation of New York, Colonel Reed's letters home became more hurried and less frequent. His duties were incessant, and harassing, and as the American lines were during the next few weeks extended over a large space from the Heights of Haerlem to White Plains, and every day new demonstrations were made at different points by the enemy, his whole time and attention were absorbed by the engrossing calls of military duty. The discipline of the army, for which the Adjutant-General was mainly responsible, had been disorganized in the extreme. We have seen the complaints made to Congress on the subject by Washington. In these opinions most, if not all the general officers concurred. Unfortunately too, sectional feelings mingled in the unpleasant excitement that prevailed. The southern troops, comprising the regiments raised south of the Delaware, looked with very unkind feelings on those from New England, especially on those from Connecticut, whose peculiarities of deportment made them the objects of ill-disguised derision among their fellow-soldiers. Any one who will read the contemporary memoirs, will see to what extent this was carried. Additional asperity was given to this feeling by the accidental contrast of the gallantry of the Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland troops on Long Island, to the ignominious cowardice of a small portion of the Connecticut brigades at Kip's Bay. The heroism of Knowlton and his comrades was hardly sufficient to wipe away the stigma that rested on his countrymen.

Dr. Gordon, in his History of the Revolution, has attributed

* Not only have the British historians attributed the fire to the Americans, but on the next day Captain Montresor, who came out as the bearer of a flag from General Howe, informed Mr. Reed, that several Americans had been detected in the act of setting fire to the city, and had in many instances been hung and shot upon the spot. It was very reasonable to draw the inference that this attempt was authorized by the retreating army. Yet, as we have seen, the fact certainly was not so.

to the Adjutant-General, as a southern officer, no little share in promoting this unkind and dangerous sectional feeling. In this he did great injustice. But the accusation had its origin long before Gordon wrote; for letters were written to the same effect to Congress, probably from the very delinquents whose offences against military decorum it had become necessary to expose.* It was no doubt from private letters thus written for an object, that the historian has drawn the inference he has so boldly and unjustly stated.

"While the camp," said Colonel Reed, in a letter written the next year to Congress, "was stationary, and danger at a distance, some crimes could not exist, and others could be prevented or punished; but when the approach of the enemy brought in the militia without any tincture of discipline—when the hurry of retreat or action made it difficult to go through the forms of trial, all restraints seemed to be broken through. A spirit of desertion, cowardice, plunder, and shrinking from duty when attended with fatigue or danger, prevailed but too generally through the whole army. And why should I disguise any part of the truth, by concealing that it was more conspicuous in one part of the army than another? The orderly books and concurrent testimony of impartial and sensible officers, even among themselves, will prove it. In this state of things, when military justice was in a great degree suspended, and the discipline and safety of the army depended upon the private virtue and exertions of the officers rather than the concern of government, it cannot be thought surprising that in very popular states many should have got into office and commissions, who would prove unworthy of them in an hour of such severe trial, endanger the service, and distress their command. Answerable as I was for the safety of the army, so far as it depended upon its guards—called by the duty of my office, and orders ten times repeated, to exert myself in preventing and punishing the great military offences I have noted before, I did speak freely, though generally in private, to such officers as failed in their duty by absence from camp on pretence of sickness, and brought to trial without favour every officer or soldier who was charged with cowardice, fraud, or plunder of the public stores, or the poor inhabitants. There was not a person on this wide continent more anxious than myself to extinguish all distinctions except those which merit and service create, but it is impossible, it is too deeply rooted to be eradicated. I thought it not amiss to avail myself of what could not be remedied and endeavoured to draw emulation from that

* Gordon's ponderous history of the war is a curious and ill-digested collection of materials. He had access to much that was authentic, but made strange and often mischievous use of what he had. His work was published in England. It is quite as much a British as an American version.

source. The ignorant, the timid, and the lazy, convinced that I am not vulnerable should they attempt to enter into particulars, have hence taken occasion to charge me with creating disunion and division. Had my conversation embittered the mind of the General, or in private correspondence those of any members of Congress—had it been the subject of open, invi-dious, comparison to officers of other provinces or even of private letters to my friends at home, there might be some colour for the charge,—but my soul is above such practices. What I said was to the faulty, or their friends, openly, and above all disguise, proceeding from an honest, though perhaps too zealous a hope of amendment on points which, if not amended, must sooner or later end in the destruction of this army, and finally of the cause itself.”*

How frightful the disorganization of the army was at this time, and how entirely within bounds the allegations of the Adjutant-General, thus earnestly made were, is abundantly apparent from General Washington's letters to Congress, from which I am tempted to make a single extract, if it be only to do justice to Mr. Reed, who seems to have been made to bear all the odium of complaint.

“As a proof of it,” says Washington in his admirable and eloquent despatch of the 24th September, from the Heights of Haerlem, “thirty or forty soldiers will desert at a time; and of late a practice prevails of the most alarming nature, and which will, if it cannot be checked, prove fatal both to the country and the army. I mean the infamous practice of plundering. For under the idea of Tory property, or property that may fall into the hands of the enemy, no man is secure in his effects, and scarcely in his person. In order to get at them, we have several instances of people being frightened out of their houses, under pretence of these houses being ordered to be burned; and this is done with a view of seizing the goods; nay, in order that the villainy may be more effectually concealed, some houses have actually been burned to cover the theft. I have with some others used my utmost endeavours to stop this horrid practice; but under the present lust after plunder, and want of laws to punish offenders, I might almost as well attempt

* Nor was this freedom of complaint in familiar correspondence confined to Colonel Reed. Washington, in writing to his brother on the 19th of November, said, “the different states, without regard to the qualifications of an officer, are quarrelling about the appointments, and nominate such as are not fit to be shoe-blacks, from the local attachments of this or that member of Assembly. I am wearied to death with the retrograde motion of things, and I solemnly protest that a pecuniary reward of twenty thousand pounds would not induce me to undergo what I do,” &c.—*Sparks's Washington*, iv. 184.

to move Mount Atlas. I have ordered instant corporal punishment upon every man who passes our lines, or is seen with plunder, that the offenders may be punished for disobedience of orders; and I enclose to you the proceedings of a court martial held upon an officer, who with a party of men had robbed a house a little beyond our lines of a number of valuable goods; among which, (to show that nothing escaped,) were four large pier looking-glasses, women's clothes, and other articles which one would think could be of no earthly use to him. He was met by a Major of brigade, who ordered him to return the goods, as taken contrary to general orders; which he not only refused to do, but drew up his party, and swore he would defend them at the hazard of his life; on which I ordered him to be arrested and tried for plundering, disobedience of orders, and mutiny. For the result I refer to the proceedings of the court, whose judgment appeared so exceedingly extraordinary, that I ordered a reconsideration of the matter; upon which, and with the assistance of fresh evidence, they made a shift to cashier him. I adduce this instance to give some idea to Congress of the current sentiments and general character of the officers who compose this army."*

It must have been in a moment of extreme perplexity at these vexations of office, that on the 11th of October Mr. Reed wrote the following letter to his wife, a letter very illustrative of that peculiarity of temperament to which he alludes in his correspondence, which was depressed by anticipated evil and rallied readily when the hour of danger and suffering arrived. In a day or two after this gloomy letter was written, the British landed at Frog's Neck, active military movements recommenced, and all thoughts of retirement seemed to be banished.

TO MRS. REED.†

Head-quarters, October 11th, 1776.

I wrote you, my dearest love, about five days ago, since which I have not one line from any body about you; I shall therefore conclude the best, that you are in a fair way. God grant it; all my hopes of comfort and happiness in this world would be extinguished should it be otherwise. I wrote you some time ago, that I had acquainted Congress with my intention to resign my office of Adjutant-General. Every succeeding circumstance has confirmed this sentiment, and I hope ere long to hear that my successor is

* *Sparks's Washington*, iv. 110.

† This letter refers to the birth of a daughter, Theodosia, 2d October, 1776. She died in infancy.

appointed. If my personal services were of such weight in the scale as to make it preponderate, no consideration could make me quit the service, but as I am of opinion that some person may be found more skilled in military matters, and of more temper to bear the rubs and obstacles which ignorance and imprudence are constantly throwing in my way, I think I may with a safe conscience resign it into other hands. To attempt to introduce discipline and subordination into a new army must always be a work of much difficulty, but where the principles of democracy so universally prevail, where so great an equality and so thorough a levelling spirit predominates, either no discipline can be established, or he who attempts it must become odious and detestable, a position which no one will choose. It is impossible for any one to have an idea of the complete equality which exists between the officers and men who compose the greater part of our troops. You may form some notion of it when I tell you that yesterday morning a captain of horse, who attends the General, from Connecticut, was seen shaving one of his men on the parade near the house. I have not yet any answer to my application, but expect it, as I have expressed myself of and to some people here with such freedom, after the affair of the 15th of last month, that I believe many of them wish me away. You ask me what I propose to do. It is a difficult question to answer. My idea is shortly this, that if France or some other foreign power does not interfere, or some feuds arise among the enemy's troops, we shall not be able to stand them next spring. If we keep our ground this fall, which we may do if a good supply of blankets and clothing can be had, and there is no disappointment in the provision to be made for the camp from the northward; but if the enemy should make a vigorous push, I would not answer for our success at any time. In the course of this winter it will be seen what expectations can be had of the interference of a foreign power, in which event I have no doubt the liberties of America may be established on the most permanent footing. Should this happen, as I never meant to make arms a profession, my duty to you and my dear children will lead me to pursue that course of life which will contribute most to their and your happiness, for though I would wish to serve my country, and would not spare myself in the work, I have not the least desire to sacrifice you and them to fame, even if I was sure to attain it. Should there be no such interference, my estate is no object of confiscation, my rank is not so high as to make me an example, and at all events I only have to set out in the world anew.

The accounts I have from Philadelphia are very unfavourable. From what I can learn there is a considerable party for absolute and unconditional submission. Jemmy Allen was here the other day with a view to discover I suppose what prospects *we* had, so that the party might take their measures accordingly. I fancy things did not please him, as a person must be in the secret to know the worst of our affairs. This letter, my dearest love, is written only for your own eye. I shall write to Mr. Cox, and give him what little news we have. I am happiest when I have none to send you,

as I have so little expectation of sending you what is good. My most sanguine views do not extend further than keeping our ground here till this campaign closes. If the enemy inclines to press us, it is resolved to risk an engagement, for if we cannot fight them on this ground we can on none in America. The ships are the only circumstance unfavourable to us here. We do not see or hear anything from the enemy which indicates a speedy attack, but it is certain that if they intend it this fall they must do it soon.

On the next day General Howe, having completed his preparations, landed a large body of troops at Frog's Neck on Long Island Sound, and pushed on his advance posts towards the causeway and bridge which formed the connexion with the main land. Colonels Hand and Prescott were detached to oppose their further progress, and kept them in check for several days.

TO MRS. REED.

White Plains, October 13th.

Since I wrote, the enemy have made a grand movement, and are endeavouring to get above us. The principal part of this army is moved off of this Island, and matters seem hastening fast to a decisive issue. God grant it may be a favourable one.

TO MR. PETTIT.

White Plains, October 14th.

I had at one time concluded that the enemy would go into winter quarters, satisfied with the summer's business, but I find I was mistaken. They have taken post above the main body of our army, keeping constantly the same object in view, that of surrounding us. We have now every advantage of ground, and if the men will fight, I cannot but hope we shall foil them in any attempt they make. My own opinion is that if we cannot fight them here, we cannot do it anywhere. I am sorry to say too many officers from all parts leave the army when danger approaches. It is of the most ruinous consequences. It breaks the spirit that remains, and we are obliged to do the duty of the absent. They should be ordered back without exception, and even compelled. Every nerve should be strained to collect and forward provisions from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, for if we can keep the enemy at bay but a little time they must fight us under great

disadvantage, or the season will drive them off. I hope our friends there will do what they can for us, while we are exposing our lives for them. I was much surprised at your mentioning me as one proposed for Governor. I would not on any account consent to it, or any thing of the kind. Pray do all you can to suppress any such measure."*

The incidents of the next few days were such as to require the entire vigilance of the Americans, and yet to disappoint all expectations of actual conflict. New York Island with the exception of Fort Washington was evacuated, and the line of Highlands on the west side of the little river Bronx, from Kingsbridge to White Plains, was occupied by Washington's scattered army, waiting in their strong position the attack so long threatened by the enemy. Sir William Howe's movements, and their result, were little calculated to impress his adversaries or his countrymen with admiration of his decision or military capacity, and his six days' impotent sojourn at the extremity of Frog's Neck, unable to reach the mainland over a ruined causeway, exposed to the insults of the American outposts, was the object of unrepressed ridicule from opposition in and out of Parliament in Great Britain. On the 18th he transported his troops to the adjoining promontory of Pell's Neck, and began his march towards the American lines in the direction of New Rochelle and White Plains. It was not unmolested. On the first day's march the British were attacked, and a severe skirmish fatal to many gallant men on both sides occurred, and on the third day after (21st) Lord Stirling, with Haslet's Delaware regiment, which since the bravery exhibited on Long Island on the 27th of August, seems to have been chosen for all feats of peculiar danger, crossed the line of the British march, and surprised the camp of the partisan Major Rogers at Mamaronec. Every day witnessed some skirmish in which, though the enemy, by dint of superior numbers and discipline had apparent success, the Americans acquired experience, and the habit of fearless exposure, which for their untutored levies was inestimable.

* The new Constitution of Pennsylvania was about to be put into operation. The first "Governor," or more properly "President," was Thomas Wharton.

TO MRS. REED.

White Plains, October 26.

"I wrote you the day before yesterday. Our situation is not materially altered, except that the enemy advanced upon us yesterday about four miles. We have taken post here in such a manner, that we hope they will not be able to execute their plan of surrounding us, and cutting off our communication. I can only conjecture that finding themselves baffled in this, they are now advancing to engage us. The business of this campaign, and possibly the next may probably be determined this week. To the protection of that Being who blessed our early days and first connexion, I must commend you and the dear children."

On the next day these anticipations were verified, and the British and Hessians, under Sir William Erskine and General De Hicter, attacked in force the position of the Americans at Chatterton's Hill. From the detailed account given of this affair by General Heath in his Journal, it would appear that the attack was made whilst Washington, Lee, and their staff were reconnoitering in another direction, and that they were recalled by a hurried message from the Adjutant-General, that the enemy were advancing on the camp, and had already driven in the picket guards. Washington observed calmly "Gentlemen, we have other business now than reconnoitering. You will repair to your respective posts, and do the best you can."* The action was severe, and the loss considerable on both sides, the British remaining masters of the field, and the Americans retreating in good order, carrying off their wounded and artillery. Again the Maryland and Delaware regiments, under Smallwood and Haslet, were in the thickest of the fight. On the 1st of November, a similar action took place with severe loss to both, and from that time till the British retrograde movement on the 5th, the two armies lay in sullen and inactive defiance watching each other's movements.

On the night of the 28th, and morning of the next day, as appears from General Howe's despatches to the Minister, he had it in contemplation to assault the American camp, "but observing their lines to be much strengthened by additional

* *Heath's Memoirs*, p. 77.

works, the designed attack was deferred, and the fourth brigade, left in New York with Lord Percy, and two battalions of the sixth, were ordered to join the army."*

On the next day the design was resumed, and again relinquished on account, says the same despatch, of a heavy storm. The reader will smile at a contemporary American account of these imposing works, from which the British General thus recoiled. "The two armies," says General Heath, "lay looking at each other within long cannon-shot. In the night time the British lighted up a vast number of fires, the weather growing pretty cold. These fires, some on the level ground, some at the foot of the hills, and at all distances to their brows, some of which are lofty, seemed to the eye to mix with the stars, and to be of different magnitudes. The American side doubtless exhibited to them a similar appearance. On this day our General ordered three redoubts, with a line in front to be thrown up on the summit of his post, so constructed that the whole of them could make a defence and support each other at the same time if attacked. These, to the enemy, in whose view they fully were, must have appeared very formidable, although they were designed principally for defence against small arms, and perhaps works never were raised quicker. There were the stalks of a large corn-field at the spot: the pulling these up in hills, took up a large lump of earth with each. The roots of the stalks and earth on them placed on the face of the works answered the purpose of sods or fascines. The tops being placed inwards, as the loose earth was thrown upon them, became as so many ties to the work, which was carried up with a despatch scarcely conceivable."†

During the night of the 3d, the attention of the American sentries was attracted to an unusual movement in the British camp, and so close were the outposts that the noise of the wagons and artillery could be distinctly heard from the one to the other, and on the 5th and 6th the British commanders, despairing of bringing Washington to action beyond his lines, defiled suddenly to the left, towards Kingsbridge, leaving the Ame-

* Sir William Howe's letter to Lord George Germain, 30th November, 1776.

† *Heath's Memoirs*, 81.

ricans in extreme doubt as to their plan and object. "Howe must," says Washington, writing to Governor Livingston, "attempt something on account of his reputation, for what has he done as yet with his great army?"*

TO MRS. REED.

Camp near White Plains, November 6th, 1776.

A new cause of alarm has arisen since I wrote you last. The enemy, as we suppose, finding our army too advantageously posted to venture an attack, the night before last began to move with all their baggage. Their course was towards the North River, which they still continue. Opinions here are various. Some think they are falling down upon Mount Washington, and after carrying that post are going into winter quarters. Others, that they mean to take shipping on the North River, proceed up, and fall upon our rear. Others and a great majority think, that finding this army too strongly posted, they have changed their whole plan, and are bending southward intending to penetrate the Jerseys and so move on to Philadelphia. A few hours must determine it. If the latter is the case, a part of this army I suppose will pass over into Jersey. My heart melts within me at the thought of having that fine country desolated, for it is of little consequence which army passes. It is equally destructive to friend and foe, and when I consider your situation, your exposed situation, I feel peculiar anxiety. My own opinion is, that the season is too far advanced for any movements of consequence, but that it is probable some excursions may be made to distress and alarm the inhabitants of New Jersey, and revive the drooping spirits of their friends, which begin to sink at the prospect of the campaign closing without the entire conquest of the rebels, as they term us. However, I may be mistaken, as I am almost singular in my opinion.

After endeavouring to ascertain with precision the intentions of the enemy, on the 15th of November Washington with the main body of the army crossed the Hudson, leaving General Lee in command of the rear guard, and the garrison at Fort Washington, under Colonel Magaw, on the east of the river. The Adjutant-General accompanied the Commander-in-chief. On the same day the whole British army invested Fort Washington.

* *Sparks's Washington*, iv. 153.

CHAPTER XIII.

1776.

The Defence of Fort Washington—General Greene's opinion—Charles Lee—Surrender of the Fort—Lee's letters to Reed, 16th and 21st November—Reed's answer—Lee's letter of 24th November—Correspondence of Reed and Washington—Lee's military queries, 1779—Reed's reply—Washington's Letter, August, 1779.

THE military policy of retaining Fort Washington, involving as it ultimately did, a serious sacrifice, has been much discussed. It is one of those open questions, the decision of which is a mere matter of historical curiosity; for whether the error, for such it unquestionably was, was the error of Washington, or Greene, or both, or neither, cannot affect the judgment which has long since been formed with respect to them. It becomes necessary with a view to the correspondence presently to be resumed, to say a single word with regard to it, and to indicate most diffidently the opinion of the writer of this memoir on this much-contested point.

When the army, after the landing of the British on Frog's Neck, moved across the Haerlem River, the retention of Fort Washington was determined on by a council of war, as a sort of compromise between the opinions of those who urged the instant and complete evacuation of New York Island, and of those who were inclined to retain it. These councils of inexperienced generals, for such the majority indisputably was, and the compromises which thence ensued, must never be lost sight of by the military student of our first American war. They were the fashion of the times. A council, but a month before, had reluctantly determined on abandoning the city, and a portion of the retiring army narrowly escaped. At

Fort Washington the same cause in a measure produced far more disastrous results. There were, it must be admitted, some reasons for retaining this post in the British rear as long as practicable. It compelled General Howe to leave a considerable body of troops, under Lord Percy, in the city or on the upper part of the Island, instead of trusting it, as he might otherwise safely have done, to the protection of the fleet. The knowledge of such a post in the possession of the Americans being below him, no doubt had its influence in checking Howe's offensive operations near White Plains, and led in a measure to the faltering course he pursued. But for this and the necessity of reducing it with the assistance of his ships and boats, the march across New Jersey; which on the retrograde movement of the British was apprehended, might have been more promptly and vigorously carried into effect. All these were reasons, forcibly and naturally operating, to induce General Washington to retain the post. They even seem to have been satisfactory to General Lee, who afterwards claimed the main credit of endeavouring to save the garrison, for in writing to Colonel Reed on the 16th, the day of the surrender—not then known to him,—he seemed to regret only the reinforcement of the post, and not its being originally retained. The question of holding it after the British moved southward, and General Washington determined to cross into New Jersey, is entirely different. Chief Justice Marshall attributes the error to General Greene—whose biographer, on the other hand, endeavours to show that no one was responsible for what occurred but the Commander-in-chief himself. It is probable that there was in some measure error, and most venial error in both; and that while Greene was clearly mistaken in his estimate of the capability of the garrison for resistance, Washington erred in the perplexity in which, his own opinion being clearly in favour of withdrawing the garrison, he allowed himself to be involved by his deference to the opinion of others. That this was so, we have his own manly and modest admission in a letter, written three years afterwards, in which he attributed his whole conduct, on the occasion, to “the warfare and hesitation in his mind, which ended in the loss of the garrison.”

This brief consideration of a disputed point in our military history is necessary, in order to understand Colonel Reed's agency on the occasion, and a portion of his personal history of painful interest at the time it occurred.

We have seen that when Washington and the Adjutant-General crossed the river, on the 15th of November, they left Lee in command of the rear guard on the east side of the Hudson. His instructions were to retire, and fortify the posts beyond the Croton River, as protecting the approach to the Highlands; but in other respects he was clothed with a large discretion, the Commander-in-chief assuring him "of entire confidence in his judgment and military capacity."* At this time, and ever since the first military movements the year before, Lee enjoyed especially the confidence of the people, the army, and Congress. He was believed to have eminent military talent. He had just returned from Charleston,—his biographer asserts having been sent for express by Congress,—where a brilliant victory in the repulse of the British at Fort Moultrie, had gained him new reputation. He arrived at Camp at the moment when the council of war was hesitating, whether the army should remain where it was, or withdraw beyond the Haerlem; and probably by his decisive expression of opinion, and his influence happily controlled its determination. For this he deserved and received high credit. His very peculiarities of demeanour, his prompt, decided manner, his unhesitating enunciation of peremptory opinion, not then so offensively exaggerated as they became afterwards, gave him over an inexperienced army additional influence. Of this good opinion and general confidence he very soon showed himself unworthy; and there is no less agreeable page in our revolutionary annals, than that on which is recorded Lee's wayward and mysterious conduct, from the time of his being left in command on the east bank of the Hudson, till the day of his capture by Colonel Harcourt, at Basken Ridge.† It is impossible to resist the conclusion at which the most judicious writers have arrived, that

* *Sparks's Washington*, iv. 168.

† In St. George's chapel, at Windsor Castle, there is a statue of Colonel, afterwards Earl Harcourt, with a bas-relief commemorative of this capture.

he had sinister objects in view, especially that of gaining credit, in a separate command, at Washington's expense, which he was determined to pursue at any sacrifice of duty. Still no design of this kind was then suspected by any of his confiding friends—least of all by Mr. Reed, or any one attached to the family of the Commander-in-chief.*

On the 14th of November, Washington and the Adjutant-General arrived at Greene's head-quarters at Fort Lee. This was within sight of Mount Washington, which at the time was surrounded on all sides but one by the British troops. General Greene had reinforced it, and the commanding officer was confident it could be maintained. Reed thought differently. Perhaps some personal feeling mingled in this opinion. The garrison was composed almost entirely of Pennsylvania troops under Magaw and Cadwalader,† and a small detachment of Maryland riflemen, commanded by Otho H. Williams. They were Reed's friends and neighbours, the remnant of the brave men who had suffered so severely on Long Island under Atlee and Smallwood. It was natural that solicitude should be strongly felt and expressed. Looking back on these scenes, it is scarcely conceivable why this attempt at useless defiance was made, and these brave men so uselessly sacrificed. Yet it was so. The counsel prevailed, and the resolution was taken to defend the post. It was not then suspected that during the night the British had passed both the forts with their boats, and transporting a large body of troops under General Matthews and Lord Cornwallis through the Spuyten-Devil, landed them before the only part of the works which, on account of its supposed security, was left unprotected.

The garrison did its desperate duty gallantly. On the morning of the 15th, the British Adjutant-General summoned it to surrender, threatening a promiscuous and unsparing slaughter should the works be carried by assault. Colonel Magaw returned in answer, that the threat was unworthy those

* The reader is referred to Mr. Sparks's elaborate and most judicious note on this subject, in the Appendix to the IVth volume of *Washington*, p. 530.

† Lieut Col. Lambert Cadwalader, who had succeeded to the command on Col. Shee's resignation a few weeks before.

who made it, and that he should defend the post to the last extremity.* A copy of this reply was sent across the river. Washington was at Hackinsac, Greene despatched a messenger with the letter, and sent word to Magaw to keep his ground till further orders. Washington immediately hastened back, intending to cross the river and by personal inspection regulate his own judgment as to what ought to be done, but arriving at the ferry met Greene and Putnam on their return from the fort. They assured him the troops were in high spirits, and would and could maintain their ground. It being late at night he returned to his quarters, reluctantly acquiescing in what it was perhaps then too late to alter.

The events of the next day (16th) have been often described. The defence, though mismanaged in many particulars, was bravely conducted, and it was not until every reasonable hope had failed that the post was surrendered. Such was Washington's almost desperate anxiety, that at the close of the action, during a temporary cessation of the cannonade, he sent a note to Colonel Magaw, promising that if he could hold out till evening an effort should be made to bring off his men. It was however then too late. The articles of capitulation were by this time signed. Again, as from the redoubts at Brooklyn, was Washington compelled to witness the sacrifice of his most cherished troops, and it may easily be imagined how deep was the despondency and vexatious the disappointment of those who, condemned to inaction at Fort Lee, had so earnestly counselled against what had been done. Amidst this natural and prevalent excitement, the following letter was received from Lee.

TO COLONEL REED, ADJUTANT-GENERAL.

Camp, 16th November, 1776.

MY DEAR REED,

Whether it is owing to my ignorance of certain circumstances, or what reason I cannot pretend to say, but from the time the great stores were secured, and the impossibility of preventing the enemy from passing up and

* *Sparks's Washington*, iv. 179.

down the river ascertained, I confess I cannot conceive what circumstances give to Fort Washington so great a degree of value and importance as to counterbalance the probability or almost certainty of losing fourteen hundred of our best troops. In this persuasion I cannot help expressing my concern that General Greene has reinforced it. I should have been rather pleased had he called off a considerable part of the garrison. In my opinion the enemy will not besiege it so much from an idea of its intrinsic value, as with a view of saving their honour and figuring in the foreign papers. You recommend to me some movement in order to distract. You must be too well acquainted with the natural strength of the ground not to see the facility of circumvallating themselves "*hors d'insult.*" Yesterday I detached a party of eleven hundred under Sullivan, in hopes of surprising Rogers and his neighbouring brigade, but they had intelligence and fled. The militia leave us to-morrow. Our numbers will be small to protect so large a tract of country from the depredations of the enemy, which is really an important point considering their circumstances. I wish not to cede another inch, and hope to effect it. You may assure the General that I will act offensively to the utmost of my power. Adieu, my dear Reed. My respects to the General. Yours affectionately,

CHARLES LEE.

On the 21st, General Lee again wrote as follows:

TO COLONEL REED.

I have just received your letter dated Hackinsac by Cornelius Cooper. His Excellency recommends me to move with the troops under my command to the other side of the river. I apprehend that this advice is founded on the presumption that we have the means of crossing at or near Dobb's Ferry, or that my corps is moved up the country near to King's Ferry. There are no means of passing Dobb's Ferry, and as we remain where you left us, the round by King's Ferry would be so great that we could not be there in time to answer any purpose. I have therefore ordered General Heath, who is close to the only ferry which can be passed, to detach two thousand men to apprise his Excellency and await his further orders, a mode which I flatter myself will answer better what I conceive to be the spirit of the orders than should I move the corps from hence. Withdrawing our troops from hence would be attended with some very serious consequences, which at present would be tedious to enumerate. As to myself, I hope to set out to-morrow.*

* In General Heath's published journal, under date of the 20th, is the following (p. 88): "Just at evening an express which General Heath had sent down to General Washington before he had any knowledge of what had happened returned with a most alarming account of what he had seen with his own eyes; viz., that

Before either of these letters was answered, and whilst all the excitement continued, the British on the 20th crossed the river, and forcing the garrison to abandon Fort Lee precipitately, drove Washington's army, reduced to little over three thousand men, across the Bergen Flats, and beyond the Hackinsac. Thence Colonel Reed wrote to Lee, who still lingered east of the Hudson.

REED TO LEE.*

Hackinsac, November 21, 1776.

DEAR GENERAL,

The letter you will receive with this contains my sentiments with respect to your present situation. But besides this I have some additional reasons for wishing most earnestly to have you where the principal scene of action is laid. I do not mean to flatter or praise you at the expense of any other, but I confess I do think it is entirely owing to you that this army, and the liberties of America, so far as they are dependent on it, are not totally cut off. You have decision, a quality often wanted in minds otherwise valuable, and I ascribe to this our escape from York Island, from Kingsbridge, and

the Americans were rapidly retreating and the British as rapidly pursuing. The Adjutant-General, (Reed,) wished to write to General Lee, but had neither pen, ink, nor paper with him. The light horseman had a rough piece of wrapping paper in his pocket, and the Adjutant-General had an old pencil. Bringing these two together he wrote to General Lee, 'Dear General, we are flying before the British. I pray—' and the pencil broke. He then told the light horseman to carry the paper to General Lee, and tell him that he was verbally ordered to add after 'I pray,' 'you to push on and join us.' The light horseman when he arrived at General Heath's was both fatigued and wet. He requested that one of his brother horsemen might proceed to General Lee, but he was told that no other could discharge the duty enjoined on him by the Adjutant-General, and that General Lee might wish to make many inquiries of him. He was therefore refreshed and pushed on."

There is reason to think there must be some mistake in this, as General Lee expressly acknowledges the receipt of a *letter* by Cornelius Cooper with fuller instructions than could be written with a broken pencil on a scrap of wrapping paper. It is possible, however, that in the hurry of the retreat from Fort Lee, when the army was literally "flying before the British," such an incident may have occurred.

* This letter never was recovered in the lifetime of the writer. Among my papers is a copy attested by a Mr. Eustace. It differs in some phrases from the one published in General Lee's Memoirs.

the Plains, and have no doubt had you been here the garrison of Mount Washington would now have composed part of this army. All these circumstances considered, I confess I ardently wish to see you removed where I think there will be little call for your judgment and experience to the place where they are likely to be so necessary, nor am I singular in my opinion. Every gentleman of the family, the officers and soldiers generally, have a confidence in you—the enemy constantly inquire where you are, and seem to be less confident when you are present. Colonel Cadwalader, through a special indulgence, on account of some civilities shown by his family to General Prescott, has been liberated from New York without a parole. He informs me that the enemy have a southern expedition in view—that they hold us very cheap in consequence of the late affair at Fort Washington, where both the plan of defence and execution were contemptible. If a real defence of the lines was intended, the number of troops was too few—if the fort only, the garrison was too numerous by half. General Washington's own judgment, seconded by representations by us, would, I believe, have saved the men and their arms, but unluckily General Greene's judgment was adverse. This kept the General's mind in a state of suspense till the blow was struck. Oh! General, an indecisive mind is one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall an army; how often have I lamented it this campaign. All circumstances considered, we are in a very awful and alarming situation—one that requires the utmost wisdom and firmness of mind. As soon as the season will admit, I think yourself and some others should go to Congress and form the plan of the new army, point out their defects to them, and it may possibly prevail on them to lend their whole attention to this great object, even to the exclusion of every other. If they will not or cannot do this, I fear all our exertions will be vain in this part of the world. Foreign assistance is solicited, but we cannot expect they will fight the whole battle.* But artillery and artillerists must be

* It was at this time at least surmised that assistance would in some shape be rendered from France. Silas Deane's despatch of August 18th, and Beaumarchais' letter of same date had been received, and as early as 27th October, Mr. Morris, one of the Committee of Correspondence, wrote to General Gates, then in Canada: " You say I must tell you good news. I will if you will pay me in kind, for we have had nothing but bad news lately from both our armies. We expect daily to hear of your being attacked, and have sanguine hopes of a vigorous and successful defence on your part. Much depends on it. If you keep your ground I think General Washington will keep his, and if both do this for the present fall and ensuing winter, the good news I mean to tell you will be verified. It is that the French are undoubtedly disposed to assist us in the contest, and I have little doubt but they will take part in the war next summer. Indeed it seems to me impossible but that all Europe will be involved in war, and if so, Great Britain will have her hands full, and probably be glad to render justice and reparation to the country she has so much injured."—MS. Letter, *Historical Society, N. Y.*

had if possible. I intended to say more, but the express is waiting, and I must conclude with my clear and explicit opinion that your presence is of the last importance.

Yours, &c.

Lee answered this letter on the 24th, and with his habitual proneness to exaggeration, where his own merits were concerned, gave to Colonel Reed's natural and very moderate complaint, and expression of respectful regret, weight which did not belong to them.

CHARLES LEE TO MR. REED.

Camp, November 24th, 1776.

MY DEAR REED,

I received your most obliging, flattering letter, lament with you that fatal indecision of mind which in war is a much greater disqualification than stupidity, or even want of personal courage: accident may put a decisive blunder in the right, but eternal defeat and miscarriage must attend the man of the best parts if cursed with indecision. The General recommends in so pressing a manner as almost to amount to an order, to bring over the Continental troops under my command, which recommendation or order throws me into the greatest dilemma from several considerations. Part of the troops are so ill furnished with shoes and stockings, blankets, &c., that they must inevitably perish in this wretched weather. Part of them are to be dismissed on Saturday, and this part is the best accoutred for service. What shelter we are to find on the other side of the river is a serious consideration: but these considerations should not sway me. My reason for not having marched already is that we have just received intelligence that Rogers' Corps, the Light Horse, part of the Highlanders and another brigade lie in so exposed a situation as to give the fairest opportunity of being carried. I should have attempted it last night, but the rain was too violent, and when our pieces are wet you know our troops are "hors du combat." This night I hope will be better. If we succeed we shall be well compensated for the delay; we shall likewise be able on our return to clear the country of all the articles wanted by the enemy. In every view, therefore, the expedition must answer. I have just received a most flattering letter from Don Luis Venzaga, Governor of New Orleans. He gives me the title of "*General de los Estados Unidos Americanos*," which is a tolerable step towards declaring himself our ally in positive terms. The substance is, that he is sensible of the vast advantages which must result from the separation to his master and nation—that he cannot positively enter into a regular system without consulting his master, but in the mean time he will render us all the service in his power. I only wait myself for this business of Rogers

and company being over. I shall then fly to you; for to confess a truth, I really think our Chief will do better with me than without me.

I am, dear Reed, yours most sincerely,

CHARLES LEE.

This letter was forwarded to camp by express, and being supposed to relate to official business, was opened and read by Washington, Colonel Reed being absent, on special duty, at Burlington. It appears to have wounded him deeply. Not only did it disclose the private opinions with respect to himself, of the oldest and most highly esteemed officer in the service,—for such Lee was—but it was calculated to inspire a suspicion that his more intimate and confidential friend, the Adjutant-General, was participating in a correspondence, which, on one side at least, was derogatory to his military capacity. He could infer what Reed had written only from Lee's vehement and offensive answer. Perhaps, and this may be inferred from the course which he pursued, Washington was conscious that he had, in the recent disastrous movements of the army, submitted too much to the guidance of men in every way his inferiors, and all he could complain of was the tone of this correspondence and of the want of candour which it implied. Though much pained by this disclosure, Washington acted with his usual self-control and dignity, and the sequel to this transient difficulty, equally honourable to both parties, may here be stated, though somewhat in anticipation of the order of the narrative part of this memoir. It has, however, immediate reference to the incidents of the campaign, which was just closing.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Brunswick, November 30th, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

The enclosed (Lee's letter) was put into my hands by an express from White Plains. Having no idea of its being a private letter, much less suspecting the tendency of the correspondence, I opened it, as I had done all other letters to you from the same place and Peck's Hill, upon the business of your office, as I conceived and found them to be. This, as it is the truth, must be my excuse for seeing the contents of a letter which neither inclina-

tion nor intention would have prompted me to. I thank you for the trouble and fatigue you have undergone in your journey to Burlington, and sincerely wish your labours may be crowned with the desired success.* With best respects to Mrs. Reed,

I am, dear Sir, &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

The incidents of the winter campaign of 1776-7, then commencing, were too engrossing to permit any recurrence to points of personal and private grievance, and this correspondence was wholly lost sight of. As soon as the campaign was over, it recurred to the mind at least of one of the friends, and on the 8th of March, 1777, Reed wrote to Washington a letter from which the following is an extract.

"I could have wished to have one hour of private conversation with you on the subject of a letter to me written by General Lee before his captivity. I deferred it in hopes of obtaining from him the letter to which his was an answer. I fear from what we hear that he will be sent to England, and of course there will be little probability of my obtaining it. While he stays in America, I cannot give up my hopes, and in the mean time I most solemnly assure you, that you would see in it nothing inconsistent with that respect and affection which I have and ever shall bear to your person and character. My pressing him most earnestly to join you as soon as possible, and mentioning that Mount Washington was taken before any decision was had respecting it, led to expressions and an answer which must have been disapproved by you, and which I was far from expecting. I had rather multiply instances than repeat assurances of my respect and attachment. No man in America, my dear General, more truly and ardently wishes your honour, happiness, and success, or would more exert himself to promote them. I say more upon this occasion from a probability that we shall not renew our military connexion, and therefore can have no interest than that of securing your esteem, free from all selfish principles."

And again on the 4th of June, Washington having in the interval nominated him as a general of cavalry, he writes,

"The abuse and calumny which with equal cowardice and baseness some persons have bestowed, would have given me little pain if I did not apprehend that it had lessened me in your friendship and esteem. In this part

* Colonel Reed had gone to Burlington, at the request of the Commander-in-chief, to induce the Legislature of New Jersey to raise more troops.

I confess I have received the severest wound; for I am sure you are too just and discerning to suffer the unguarded expressions of another person to obliterate the proofs I had given of a sincere, disinterested attachment to your person and fame, since you first favoured me with your regard. I am sensible, my dear sir, how difficult it is to regain lost friendship; but the consciousness of never having justly forfeited yours, and the hope that it may be in my power fully to convince you of it, are some consolation for an event which I never think of but with the greatest concern. In the mean time, my dear general, let me entreat you to judge of me by realities, not by appearances, and believe that I never entertained or expressed a sentiment incompatible with that regard I professed for your person and character, and which, whether I shall be so happy as to possess your future good opinion or not, I shall carry to my grave with me.

"A late perusal of the letters you honoured me with at Cambridge and New York last year, afforded me a melancholy pleasure. I cannot help acknowledging myself deeply affected, on a comparison with those which I have since received. I should not, my dear sir, have trespassed on your time and patience at this juncture so long, but that a former letter upon this subject I fear has miscarried; and, whatever may be my future destination and course of life, I could not support the reflection of being thought ungrateful and insincere to a friendship which was equally my pride and my pleasure. May God Almighty crown your virtue, my dear and much-respected General, with deserved success, and make your life as happy and honourable to yourself, as it has been useful to your country.

"Believe me, with the most unfeigned regard and respect, dear sir, your most obliged and affectionate humble servant," &c.

Immediately on the receipt of this letter, Washington thus replied in a letter from the Camp at Middlebrook.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Middlebrook, 14th June, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

Your favour of the 4th was given me by Joseph Arrowsmith just as Mr. Peters informed me that he was about to set out for Philadelphia. I could not resist the inclination, however, of detaining him long enough to write you a short letter, to thank you as I do most sincerely, for the friendly and affectionate sentiments contained in yours of the above date towards me, and to assure you that I am perfectly convinced of the sincerity of them.

True it is, I felt myself hurt by a certain letter, which appeared at that time to be the echo of one from you. I was hurt, not because I thought

my judgment wronged by the expressions contained in it, but because the same sentiments were not communicated immediately to myself. The favourable manner in which your opinions, upon all occasions, had been received, the impression they made, and the unreserved manner in which I wished and required them to be given, entitled me, I thought, to your advice upon any point in which I appeared to be wanting. To meet with any thing, then, that carried with it a complexion of withholding that advice from me, and censuring my conduct to another, was such an argument of disingenuity, that I was not a little mortified at it. However, I am perfectly satisfied that matters were not as they appeared from the letter alluded to.

"I sincerely wish that you may accept the appointment of Congress, and the post I am desirous of placing you in, and must beg to be favoured with an answer immediately upon the subject, as the service will not admit of delay. A general officer in that department would not only take off a great deal of trouble from me, but be a means of bringing those regiments into order and service with much more facility than it is in my power, divided as my attention is, possibly to do. Mr. Peters' waiting obliges me to conclude, and I do it with great truth,

Dear Sir,

Your obedient, and affectionate servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

From this moment, such was the influence of frank and manly explanations, all distrust and apparent estrangement were removed, and the ancient relations of friendly confidence effectually restored. Three years later, a very impotent attempt was made to revive these unpleasant feelings. In July, 1779, General Lee, in order to gratify his resentment at Washington, for what he supposed to be his injustice at the battle of Monmouth, published anonymously a number of queries, political and military, in which among others, were the following, understood at the time to refer directly to Washington and Reed.*

"*Query 9th.* Whether it is salutary or dangerous, consistent with or abhorrent from the principles and spirit of liberty and republicanism, to inculcate and encourage in the people an idea that their welfare, safety and glory depend on one man? Whether they really do depend on one man?

"*10th.* Whether among the late warm or rather loyal addresses in this city to his Excellency General Washington, there was a single

* *Memoirs of General Lee*, p. 183.

mortal, *one gentleman excepted*, who could possibly be acquainted with his merits?

"11th. Whether this gentleman excepted does really think his Excellency a great man; or whether evidence could not be produced of his sentiments being quite the reverse."

These queries the conductors of the Philadelphia Press of all parties refused to publish, and they appeared at Baltimore, in the columns of the Maryland Journal. Immediately on their publication, Mr. Reed, then President of Pennsylvania, thus noticed them.

"In a set of queries designed to assail the character of General Washington in a late paper, I am alluded to so particularly as not to be mistaken, and quoted as having furnished evidences under my own hand, that General Washington was not the distinguished character the addresses of the Council of this State had represented; from which an inference is to be drawn prejudicial to the General in point of ability, and the Council in consistency, so far as I had any share in those addresses. This insinuation I therefore think it my duty to contradict; and, though the sanctity of private and confidential correspondence has been grossly violated on this occasion, I should have passed it by, if the fact had not been as grossly misstated.

"The only ground on which this insinuation can be made, arose from the following circumstance. In the fall of 1776, I was extremely anxious that Fort Washington should be evacuated; there was a difference in opinion among those whom the General consulted, and he hesitated more than I ever knew him on any other occasion, and more than I thought the public service admitted. Knowing that General Lee's opinion would be a great support to mine, I wrote to him from Hackensack, stating the case, and my reasons, and, I think, urging him to join me in sentiment at the close of my letter; and, alluding to the particular subject then before me, to the best of my recollection, I added this sentence: 'With a thousand good and great qualities, there is a want of decision to complete the perfect military character.'

"Upon this sentence, or one to this effect, wrote in haste, in full confidence, and in great anxiety for the event, is this ungenerous sentiment introduced into the world. The event but too fully justified my anxiety; for the fort was summoned that very day, and surrendered the next. I absolutely deny that there is any other ground but this letter; and if there is, let it be produced. I have now only to add, that though General Washington soon after, by an accident, knew of this circumstance, it never lessened the friendship which subsisted between us. He had too much greatness of mind to suppose himself incapable of mistakes, or to dislike a faithful friend who should note an error with such circumstances of respect, and on such

an occasion. I have since been with this great and good man, for such he is, at very critical moments; and I hope I shall not be suspected of unbecoming adulation, when I assure my countrymen, (so far as my opinion is thought of any consequence,) that they may repose themselves in perfect confidence on his prudence and judgment, which are equal to any circumstances; and that repeated experience of the value of his opinions, have inspired him with more dependence on them than his modesty and diffidence would in some cases formerly admit. Time will show whether his enemies will not find themselves disappointed in their attempts to shake the public confidence, and lessen a character of so much worth, to gratify private violent resentments."

On this being communicated to Washington, he thus in a letter of August, 1779, frankly and modestly refers to the affair of Fort Washington, out of which this whole controversy had arisen. Though out of the regular order of time in the correspondence, a portion of this letter may appropriately be referred to in this place.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

West Point, 22d August, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

Mr. Tilghman delivered to me your favour of the 8th instant, for which, and the favourable sentiments expressed of me in your publication addressed to the printer of the Maryland Journal, you will permit me to offer my grateful acknowledgments. The loss of Fort Washington, simply abstracted from the circumstances which attended it, was an event that gave me much pain, because it deprived the army of the services of many valuable men at a critical period, and the public of many valuable lives, by the cruelties which were inflicted upon them in their captive state. But this concern received additional poignancy from two considerations, which were but little known, some of them will never be known to the world, because I shall never attempt to palliate my own foibles by exposing the error of another; nor indeed could either of them come before the public, unless there had been such a charge, as must have rendered an inquiry into the causes of this miscarriage necessary. The one was a non-compliance in General Greene with an order sent to him from White Plains, before I marched for the western side of Hudson's River, to withdraw the artillery and stores from the Fort; allowing him, however, some latitude for the exercise of his own judgment, as he was upon the spot, and could decide better from appearances and circumstances than I, the propriety of a total evacuation. The other

was a Resolve of Congress, in these emphatical words: "October 11th, 1776.—Resolved: That General Washington be desired, if it be practicable, by every art, and at whatever expense, to obstruct effectually the navigation of the North River, between Fort Washington and Mount Constitution, as well to prevent the regress of the enemy's frigates lately gone up, as to hinder them from receiving succour."

When I came to Fort Lee, and found no measures taken towards an evacuation, in consequence of the order before mentioned; when I found General Greene, of whose judgment and candour I entertained a good opinion, decidedly opposed to it; when I found other opinions coincident with his; when the wishes of Congress to obstruct the navigation of the North River, which were delivered in such forcible terms to me recurred; when I knew that the easy communication between the different parts of the army, then separated by the river, depended upon it; and, lastly, when I considered that our policy led us to waste the campaign without coming to a general action on the one hand, or suffering the enemy to overrun the country on the other, I conceived that every impediment which stood in their way, was a means to answer these purposes; and when thrown into the scale with those opinions, which were opposed to an evacuation, caused that warfare in my mind, and hesitation, which ended in the loss of the garrison; and, being repugnant to my own judgment of the advisableness of attempting to hold the post, filled me with the greater regret. The two great causes, which led to this misfortune, and which I have before recited, as well perhaps as my reasoning upon it, which occasioned the delay, were concealed from public view, of course left the field of censure quite open for any and every labourer, who inclined to work in it; and afforded a fine theme for the pen of a malignant writer who is always less regardful of facts than the point he wants to establish, where he has the field wholly to himself, where concealment of a few circumstances will answer his purpose, or where a small transposition of them will give a very different complexion to the same transaction.

Why I have run into such a lengthy discussion of this point, at this time, am at a loss myself to tell. I meant but to touch it *en passant*, but one idea succeeded another, till it would seem that I had been preparing my defence for a regular charge.*

* The rest of this letter will be found hereafter, in the order of time.

CHAPTER XIV.

1776—1777.

Retreat through New Jersey—Mifflin's Letter, 26th November—Reed visits the New Jersey Assembly—Intended resignation as Adjutant-General—Washington's Letter, 18th December—Lee's capture—Plans of attack on Trenton—Reed's Letter to Washington, 23d December—Cadwalader's Post at Bristol—Washington's Letter to Reed and Cadwalader—Reed visits Philadelphia—Conference with Putnam—Attempt to cross at Dunk's Ferry—Attack on Trenton—Donop's retreat—The Philadelphia Militia cross the Delaware—Cadwalader's Letter, 27th December—Reed advances to Trenton—Washington recrosses the Delaware—Capture of British Chasseurs near Princeton—Affairs at Trenton—Letter to Putnam, 2d January, 1777—Battle of Princeton—Death of Mereer—Washington's Letters.

THE incidents of the few weeks which succeeded the fall of Fort Lee and the invasion of New Jersey by the British army, were full of varied interest. On the 21st November, Washington was at Hackinsac, his whole army reduced to about three thousand men, and on the 23d fearing that it was the design, and might be within the power of the enemy to hem him in on the level country between the Hackinsac and Passaic Rivers, he retired first to Newark, and thence with precipitation, through Elizabethtown, to New Brunswick. On the morning of the 1st of December the Americans evacuated the latter place, and on the night of the same day the British advance guard, under Lord Cornwallis, took possession of the left bank of the Raritan. Whilst at Newark, and before it was ascertained whether the enemy designed a partial incursion into the Jerseys, or a movement towards the Delaware, Washington despatched General Mifflin to Philadelphia, to represent to Congress and the local authorities the necessity of immediate reinforcement to his dilapidated army, and sent Colonel Reed to Burlington on a like errand to the Assembly of New Jersey,

then supposed to be in session at that place. He here found his family, from whom he had been many months separated.

The duties thus confided to the two officers were faithfully executed. Mifflin on his arrival at Philadelphia thus described the success of his errand to the Commander-in-chief.

MIFFLIN TO WASHINGTON.*

Philadelphia, 26th November, 1776—9 o'clock, A. M.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

At 10 o'clock last evening I received your letter of the 24th inst., and will make proper applications of your Excellency's sentiments on the probable movements of the enemy.

I came into this town at 8 o'clock Sunday evening, and waited on Mr. Hancock with your letter immediately after my arrival. Yesterday morning I was admitted to Congress in General Committee, and went as far in my relation of the wretched appointments of the army, the dangerous and critical situation of the Jerseys and Pennsylvania, and the necessity of immediate vigorous exertions to oppose Mr. Howe, as their sensibility and *my own delicacy* would justify. After some debate, a requisition was made to the Assembly now sitting, and Council of Safety of Pennsylvania of their whole militia, and resolutions formed for the purpose of establishing wholesome and necessary regulations for this and the next campaign.

I received orders from Congress to remain in this town until your Excellency judged it necessary for me to join the army. Those orders were in consequence of the divided and lethargic state of my countrymen, who appeared to be slumbering under the shade of peace, and in the full enjoyment of the sweets of commerce.

In the afternoon I waited on the Committee of Safety, and with much success addressed *their* passions. The Assembly are to meet this morning; their lesson is prepared by the Committee of Safety and some of their leading members, who say matters will now go on well. It is proposed to call on every man in the state to turn out; such as refuse are to be fined £5 per month, the fines to be distributed among those who enlist.

To-morrow the city militia is to be reviewed. If they appear in such numbers as we expect, I am to give them a talk, well seasoned.

The German battalion move from hence to-morrow. Three regiments from Delaware and Maryland are to follow them to Brunswick as soon as possible, by which I fear the shores of Delaware, at and near New Castle, will be much exposed, provided Mr. Howe attempts to disembark in this river. Your Excellency's opinion on the designs of the enemy, and the

* MS. Never before published.

best means to oppose them, should they divert your attention in Jersey, and attempt an impression on this state by means of their ships, will be necessary from time to time.

The light horse of the State of Virginia are ordered to join your Excellency's army. The principal military stores are to be removed from hence. Five hundred thousand musket cartridges will be sent to Brunswick.

A prize-ship came in yesterday. She had on board when taken by a Congress Packet 20,000 hard [illegible], 9000 of which were lost by an attempt [illegible] them on board the packet at sea.

Ordered 1000 wagons to be collected, if possible near this city, to remove when occasion requires, the most essential articles belonging to the public. I sent Colonel Harrison's letter to him last evening.

Mrs. Washington's letter is in the post-office, and will be forwarded by post at eleven o'clock this day.

I am, my dear General, with much attachment,

Your obedient, humble servant,

THOMAS MIFFLIN.

The Council of Safety, I am just informed, open the campaign this day by (imprisoning) the principal Tories in and near the city.

At no period of the war did any portion of the Colonies exhibit a finer spirit than the majority of the citizens of Philadelphia at this juncture. The militia was immediately and efficiently organized, and a large body, well equipped, marched to join Washington at the upper passes of the Delaware.

Colonel Reed had less success in his appeal to the Assembly of New Jersey. In fact the government of this State was almost wholly broken up. "The defenceless Legislature with their governor,—William Livingston,—at their head, wandered from Princeton to Burlington, from Burlington to Pittstown, from Pittstown to Haddonfield, and there finally at the utmost verge of the State dissolved themselves on the 2d of December, leaving each member to look to his own safety, at a moment when the efforts of legislators would be of no avail, and when there was no place where they could safely hold their sessions."*

Before leaving Camp, Colonel Reed had communicated to Washington his intention to resign the post of Adjutant-General.

* *Sedgwick's Memoir of Governor Livingston*, p. 211.

ral, meaning, however, to remain with the army, attached to the staff as a volunteer, and from Burlington he wrote to the President of Congress communicating his resignation in form. At midnight of the 1st of December, he received an earnest message from Washington, begging him to reconsider this determination, and informing him that the plans of the enemy were at last developed; for, that invited by the broken state of the Americans, they were rapidly advancing in full force to the Delaware. A messenger was instantly despatched by Reed to recall the resignation. He arrived in time to deliver the letter before Congress met, and returned with the commission, with which Colonel Reed joined Washington at Trenton the next morning, leaving his family, consisting of an aged mother, a wife of delicate frame and infirm health, with an infant a few weeks old, and three small children, to find a retreat in the pines of West Jersey.

After pausing for a few days at Trenton, on the 8th of December, Washington pursued his retreat further, and destroying the boats with which he crossed the river, took post on its western bank. His situation at this moment was deplorable. His troops were reduced to a mere handful. It was entirely uncertain whether any reinforcements could be procured. Disappointed in his hopes from New Jersey where the spirit of disaffection was prevalent, he could not tell what reliance could be had on Pennsylvania.* The British General had issued a proclamation of immunity to all who before a given period should return to their allegiance, under which Galloway, the Allens, and many other influential men had, in the phrase of the day, "gone in." "In a word," said Washington in his extreme despondency, writing to his brother on the 18th December, "if every nerve is not strained to recruit the new army with all possible expedition, *the game is nearly up.*"

* On this disaffection the British Generals calculated largely. "The night," says Lord Cornwallis, "General Howe arrived at Trenton, he detached me with a considerable corps of troops from Maidenhead to Coryell's Ferry, where we had some hopes from previous measures taken by the General that we should have found boats to cross the river. Our expectations were disappointed, and we found no boats."

The conduct of Lee, who, notwithstanding Washington's earnest orders and solicitations, with the rear-guard of the army, was pursuing his march slowly from the North River towards the Delaware, and who finally fell a victim to his own perverse rashness, added to this reasonable perplexity. Letter after letter,—express after express—was despatched to hasten his march, but it seemed in vain; and on the 13th of December, a few minutes after he had written to General Gates complaining of what he styled Washington's "damnable deficiency," the ink scarcely dry on his paper, he was captured and carried off, with every mark of indignity, by a party of dragoons under Colonel Harcourt.* There seemed to be an aggregation of misfortunes to weigh down the spirit of the country and the Commander-in-chief.

On the 8th of December, Reed was the bearer of a letter to Congress urging that body to use its influence to send reinforcements, "as not a moment's time should be lost in assembling such force as can be collected." The appeal was not in vain, and not only did a considerable body of the local militia join Washington at Trenton, but a large volunteer detachment, acting in concert with a portion of the Rhode Island Continental Troops, was formed at Bristol under Colonel John Cadwalader, to oppose any movement which might be made by the Hessian parties under Count Donop, extending as low down as the neighbourhood of Bordentown and the Black Horse. As soon as the militia was thus assembled, Colonel Reed was sent by Washington to join Cadwalader, and there remained till the battle of Trenton, and the offensive movements which followed it.

At what precise period and at whose instance the attack on

* Whilst much just censure has fallen on Lee for his mysterious and wayward conduct at this time, it is due to him to say, that the fact of his being separated from what was considered the main body of the army, and above the enemy, had its effect upon Howe's movements. When on his examination in Parliament, Lord Cornwallis was asked why he had not advanced across New Jersey with more rapidity in pursuit of Washington, his answer was "We wanted reinforcement in order to leave troops for the communication between Brunswick and Amboy. *It was likewise necessary to pay some attention to a considerable body then passing the North River under General Lee.*"—Sir William Howe's *Observations*, p. 66.

Trenton was determined on, is not ascertained. It is an inquiry of little moment, as in all probability it occurred to the mind of every one whose counsel was taken, that the cause was desperate indeed, unless some offensive movement was made. It probably was thought of and perhaps talked of in the confidential councils of the Commander-in-chief for many days before it was determined on. On the 14th December, Washington wrote to Gates: "If we can draw our forces together, I trust under the smiles of Providence, we may yet effect an important stroke, or at least prevent General Howe from executing his plans."* On the same day, he wrote to Governor Trumbull shadowing forth more distinctly his wishes rather than his plan: "By coming on, the troops under Gates may, in conjunction with my present force, and that under General Lee, enable us to attempt a stroke upon the forces of the enemy, who lie a good deal scattered, and to all appearance in a state of security. A lucky blow in this quarter would be fatal to them, and would most certainly rouse the spirits of the people, which are quite sunk by our late misfortunes." It is not improbable that the news of Lee's capture, the indications given of the enemy's retiring and going into winter quarters, strengthened by the artful device of a deserter from the British General Vaughan's family, and the delay of the advance of the northern reinforcements, suppressed for a time these undefined plans, for there is no trace of their being again thought of, till the day after Gates and Sullivan joined the army, when (21st December) General Greene wrote to the Governor of Rhode Island, "We are now," he says, "on the west side of the Delaware—our force is small when collected together; but small as it is, I hope we shall give the enemy a stroke in a few days. Should fortune favour the attack, perhaps it may put a stop to General Howe's progress."† On the next day (22d) Washington wrote to Robert Morris a letter from which it is fair to infer either that the plan of attack was not even then matured; or that if matured, its success was not matter of very confident calculation.‡

* *Sparks's Washington*, iv. 215, 219.

† *Ib.* iv. 542.

‡ This letter is among the Morris MSS.

In the state of feeling which the whole correspondence indicates, it is certain that the following letter from Colonel Reed, at Bristol, filled with minute and accurate information of the enemy's situation, and earnest exhortations to some attempt upon them, had an immediate and conclusive influence. It is curious and important too, as showing that a separate attack on the Hessians at the Black Horse was decided on by the officers at Bristol, without the orders or concurrence of the Commander-in-chief, on their own responsibility, and at a time when, as the letter shows, it was unknown whether their attack would be seconded by a corresponding movement at Trenton. It was a project most gallantly conceived.

REED TO WASHINGTON.*

Bristol, December 22d, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

Pomroy, whom I sent by your order to go to Amboy, and so through the Jerseys and round by Princeton to you, returned to Burlington yesterday. He went to South Amboy, but was not able to get over; upon which he came to Brunswick, passed on to Princeton, and was prevented from going to Pennington, upon which he returned to Burlington by way of Cranbury.

His intelligence is, that he saw no troops, baggage wagons, or artillery going to New York, except about eight wagons, which he understood had the baggage of some of the light-horse, who had been relieved and were going into quarters. At Cranbury he saw sixteen wagons going down to South Amboy for the baggage of about five hundred men, who were to quarter about Cranbury, being enlisted forces commanded by one Lawrence. At Brunswick he saw four pieces of cannon; the number of men he could not learn, but they did not exceed six or eight hundred. Princeton, he says, was called head-quarters, and there he saw a very considerable body of troops coming out of the College, meeting-house and other places where they quartered. He understood they were settled in their winter quarters, and had given over further operations till the spring. In Burlington County he found them scattered through all the farmers' houses, eight, ten, twelve, and fifteen in a house, and rambling over the whole country.

Colonel Griffin has advanced up the Jerseys with six hundred men as far as Mount Holly, within seven miles of their head-quarters at the Black Horse. He has written over here for two pieces of artillery and two or three hundred volunteers, as he expected an attack very soon. The spirits

* This letter was first published by Mr. Sparks in the Appendix to his fourth volume of the Washington Correspondence. The original is in the Department of State.

of the militia here are very high ; they are all for supporting him. Colonel Cadwalader and the gentlemen here all agree, that they should be indulged. We can either give him a strong reinforcement, or make a separate attack ; the latter bids fairest for producing the greatest and best effects. It is therefore determined to make all possible preparation to-day ; and, no event happening to change our measures, the main body here will cross the river to-morrow morning, and attack their post between this and the Black Horse, proceeding from thence either to the Black Horse or the Square, where about two hundred men are posted, as things shall turn out with Griffin. If they should not attack Griffin as he expects, it is probable both our parties may advance to the Black Horse, should success attend the intermediate attempt. If they should collect their force and march against Griffin, our attack will have the best effects in preventing their sending troops on that errand, or breaking up their quarters and coming in upon their rear, which we must endeavour to do in order to free Griffin.

We are all of opinion, my dear General, that something must be attempted to revive our expiring credit, give our cause some degree of reputation, and prevent a total depreciation of the Continental money, which is coming on very fast ; that even a failure cannot be more fatal, than to remain in our present situation ; in short, some enterprise must be undertaken in our present circumstances, or we must give up the cause. In a little time the Continental army will be dissolved. The militia must be taken before their spirits and patience are exhausted ; and the scattered, divided state of the enemy affords us a fair opportunity of trying what our men will do, when called to an offensive attack. Will it not be possible, my dear General, for your troops, or such part of them as can act with advantage, to make a diversion, or something more, at or about Trenton ? The greater the alarm, the more likely the success will attend the attacks. If we could possess ourselves again of New Jersey, or any considerable part of it, the effects would be greater than if we had never left it.

"Allow me to hope that you will consult your own good judgment and spirit, and not let the goodness of your heart subject you to the influence of opinions from men in every respect your inferiors. Something must be attempted before the sixty days expire which the commissioners have allowed ; for, however many affect to despise it, it is evident that a very serious attention is paid to it, and I am confident that unless some more favourable appearance attends our arms and cause before that time, a very great number of the militia officers here will follow the example of those of Jersey and take benefit from it. I will not disguise my own sentiments, that our cause is desperate and hopeless, if we do not take the opportunity of the collection of troops at present, to strike some stroke. Our affairs are hastening fast to ruin if we do not retrieve them by some happy event. Delay with us is now equal to a total defeat. Be not deceived, my dear General, with small, flattering appearances ; we must not suffer ourselves to be lulled into security and inaction, because the enemy does not cross the river.

It is but a reprieve ; the execution is the more certain, for I am very clear that they can and will cross the river, in spite of any opposition we can give them.

Pardon the freedom I have used. The love of my country, a wife and four children in the enemy's hands, the respect and attachment I have to you, the ruin and poverty that must attend me, and thousands of others will plead my excuse for so much freedom.* I am, with the greatest respect and regard, dear sir,

Your obedient and affectionate humble servant,

JOSEPH REED.

On the receipt of this letter, Colonel Reed was sent for to head-quarters, and Washington communicated to him the outlines of his plan for an attack on Trenton, and urged that no time should be lost in a movement on the enemy's lower posts. On the Adjutant-General's return to Bristol, where he conferred with Cadwalader, in company with Colonel John Cox, he crossed the river and proceeded to the quarters of Colonel Griffin at Mount Holly, to determine on measures of immediate and active co-operation. They found that officer seriously ill, and the condition of his troops, their number and equipment, such as put an end to all hope of effective effort on his part. All that could be promised was a partial diversion, which was carried into effect the next day, and by means of which Count Donop was drawn from his quarters at Bordentown further into the interior, Griffin retiring, slowly skirmishing, before him.†

* The situation of Colonel Reed's family at Evesham was such that if the enemy made a successful advance, they might probably be made prisoners. Hence this expression. There is a curious coincidence between this language and General Washington's in a letter to Congress of 20th December. "It may be thought that I am going a good deal out of the line of my duty to adopt these measures, or to advise them freely. A character to lose, an estate to forfeit, the inestimable blessings of liberty at stake, and a life devoted, must be my excuse."

— *Washington's Works*, iv. p. 235.

† Galloway in his pamphlet on the conduct of the war in the middle colonies. (p. 159), published in London in 1780, says, "To draw Donop from Bordentown, and prevent his supporting Rhal, (Washington) sent 450 militia, many of them boys, picked up in Philadelphia, Gloucester, and Salem Counties, not to fight but to fly as soon as they had misled Donop. The plan succeeded; Donop marched against this insignificant rebel party with his whole corps, 80 left at Bordentown excepted, down to Mount Holly, twelve miles from his own post, and eighteen from Trenton, the post he ought to have been at hand to support. The rebels

Reed returned to Bristol before daylight on the 23d, and within a few hours received the following hurried letter from Washington.

TO JOSEPH REED, ESQ.

OR IN HIS ABSENCE TO JOHN CADWALADER, ESQ., ONLY, AT BRISTOL.

Camp above Trenton Falls, 23d December, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

The bearer is sent down to know whether your plan was attempted last night, and if not to inform you that Christmas day at night, one hour before day is the time fixed upon for our attempt on Trenton. For Heaven's sake, keep this to yourself, as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us; our numbers, sorry am I to say, being less than I had any conception of; but necessity, dire necessity will, nay must, justify my attack. Prepare, and in concert with Griffin, attack as many of their posts as you possibly can, with a prospect of success; the more we can attack at the same instant, the more confusion we shall spread and greater good will result from it. If I had not been fully convinced before of the enemy's designs, I have now ample testimony of their intentions to attack Philadelphia so soon as the ice will afford the means of conveyance. As the colonels of the Continental regiments might kick up some dust about command unless Cadwallader is considered by them in the light of a Brigadier, which I wish him to be, I desired General Gates, who is unwell and applied for leave to go to Philadelphia, to endeavour if his health would permit him, to call and stay two or three days at Bristol in his way. I shall not be particular; we could not ripen matters for our attack before the time mentioned in the first part of this letter, so much out of sorts, and so much in want of every thing are the troops under Sullivan, &c. Let me know by a careful express the plan you are to pursue. The letter herewith sent, forward on to Philadelphia. I could wish it to be in in time for the Southern post's departure, which will be, I believe by eleven o'clock to-morrow. I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S.—I have ordered our men to be provided with three days' provisions ready cooked, with which and their blankets they are to march; for if we are successful, which Heaven grant, and the circumstances favour, we may push on. I shall direct every ferry and ford to be well guarded and not a

dispersed on his approach, yet instead of returning to support Rhal, he loitered two days about Burlington without an enemy to oppose," &c.

soul suffered to pass without an officer's going down with the permit; do the same with you.*

It was apparent from this letter, that General Washington relied on the co-operation of the troops below against Count Donop as part of his general plan; and as it was known that Griffin instead of advancing, had retired, it was determined by the commanding officers at Bristol to make an effort to induce Putnam to cross the river at Cooper's Ferry with such troops as he had, while the Philadelphia militia should make a similar movement at or near Bristol. A difficulty however at once presented itself, how this communication should be made to Putnam without endangering the secret. It was at last thought best that Colonel Reed should visit the city to enforce the plan by his personal influence, whilst arrangements were in progress for the attack from Bristol. He accordingly set out in the evening, and reached Philadelphia at midnight. Putnam represented the state of the militia, the general confusion which prevailed, his apprehensions of an insurrection in the city in his absence, and many other circumstances, in so strong terms as convinced him no assistance could be derived.† Reed thence returned to Bristol, which he reached on the evening of the 25th.

The troops at this place were the Pennsylvania militia, chiefly composed of the city battalions, well provided for the field, and about five hundred Rhode Island troops, a part of Lee's detachment,—commanded by Colonel Hitchcock—without stores or blankets, and otherwise very badly equipped for winter service. The whole amounted to about fifteen hundred men. To pre-

* The original of this letter is in my possession. It was first published several years ago by Wilkinson in his *Memoirs*.

† Mr. Reed reached Philadelphia at midnight of the 24th, or the morning of the 25th. At eleven a. m. he wrote to Cadwalader, "General Putnam has determined to cross the river with as many men as he can collect, which he says will be about 500; he is now mustering them and endeavouring to get Proctor's company of artillery to go with them. I wait to know what success he meets with, and the progress he makes; but at all events I shall be with you this afternoon." After this letter was written, new difficulties, such as the text refers to, must have occurred, and Putnam did not march till 27th, nor Proctor till 28th, (*See C. Marshall's Diary.*) See also *Galloway's Examination*, pp. 14, 15.

vent as far as possible any notice to the enemy, it was determined to take a circuitous route by Dunk's Ferry rather than to cross at Burlington. As Count Donop was not believed to be nearer than Mount Holly, the distance was not greater from one landing-place than from the other, and the country much more woody and uninhabited. After sunset, the boats moved down from Bristol, and the troops began their march, the light infantry and militia in front, and the Continental troops in the rear. On arriving at the ferry, some of the light infantry pushed over in the first boats, and landed on the opposite shore. The weather was very cold. An effort had been made to keep the troops from kindling fires before they embarked, but it was found impossible. Colonel Reed and one or two field officers of the militia crossed over in advance, but to their great surprise and mortification found the ice had drifted in such quantities on the Jersey shore that it was impossible to land the artillery. It was with difficulty they were enabled to get on shore with their horses. Advice being sent over to the Pennsylvania side, the troops, which by this time were mostly in the boats, were ordered to disembark, and the ice beginning to drive with such force as to threaten the boats with absolute destruction, and a heavy storm of hail and snow setting in, the expedition was reluctantly abandoned, and the troops, with the exception of a few of the light infantry, were marched back to Bristol. The Adjutant-General and Colonel Cowperthwaite, who alone had crossed with their horses, remained at the ferry on the Jersey shore, and about daybreak proceeded to Burlington, where the former had many friends, and where they remained for several hours in a kind of concealment; their object being to ascertain the exact position of the enemy.*

* Joseph Cowperthwaite, of the Northern Liberties, Philadelphia, was an officer in one of the city battalions. He saw much active service during the war, and was throughout his life a most respected citizen. Mr. Rodney of Delaware, thus describes what occurred at the Ferry. "It was as severe a night as I ever saw, and after two battalions were landed, the storm increased so much that it was impossible to get the artillery over, for we had to walk one hundred yards on the ice to get on shore. General Cadwalader therefore ordered the whole to retreat again, and we had to stand at least six hours under arms—first to cover the landing, and till all the rest had retreated again—and by this time the storm of wind, rain, hail and snow with the ice was so bad, that some of the infantry could not get back till next day. The design was to

The incidents at Trenton are well known. Washington crossed the Delaware about four in the morning of Thursday the 26th, having been retarded by the storm and floating ice, and did not begin the attack much before 8 A. M. The enterprise was bravely though irregularly resisted. In a manuscript memorandum, in my possession, is the following note in Mr. Reed's writing referring to a fact connected with the affair at Trenton not generally known. "Colonel Rhal, who commanded the Hessians at Trenton, and was mortally wounded in the affair of the 26th, died on the 27th, and his papers being brought to me, it appeared that he had received notice from General Grant at Princeton of the intended attack, which was very exact as to the time, though mistaken as to circumstances, supposing it to be a detachment under the command of Lord Stirling. There was just so much information as would have put a prudent commander on his guard. Nor in this did Rhal fail, but an accident truly casual baffled his vigilance. An advance party returning from the Jerseys to Pennsylvania fell in with the Hessian picket, and gave the alarm about two hours before the real attack, which being mistaken for the real attack threw them into greater security than ever. The storm also induced them to get under cover, and lay aside their arms, especially as the day was considerably advanced before the attack."*

have surprised the enemy at Black Horse and Mount Holly at the same time that Washington surprised them at Trenton, and had we succeeded in getting over, we should have finished all our troubles."—*H. Niles' Principles of Revolution*, p. 342. Baltimore, 1822.

Chief Justice Marshall has this note to Chapter vi. of his *Life of Washington*. "Colonel Reed, who was with Cadwalader's division, passed the ferry with the van of the infantry, and immediately despatched some trusty persons to examine the situation of the troops at Mount Holly. The report made by his messengers was that they had looked into several houses in which the soldiers were quartered, and had found them generally fast asleep under the influence, as was supposed, of the spirituous liquors they had drunk the preceding day, which was Christmas day—that there appeared to be no apprehension of danger or precaution against it."

* *Gordon*, vol. ii. p. 395-6, gives the same account with some slight variation, though on different authority. Lord Cornwallis thus refers to the officers and soldiers, on whom the discredit of this day was severely visited. "The misfortune of Trenton was entirely owing to the imprudence and negligence of the

Washington, having secured his prisoners, recrossed the Delaware into Pennsylvania and resumed his former position. The cannonade had been distinctly heard at Burlington and Bristol, but the result was not known except through ill-defined rumours till the next day. The Adjutant-General and Colonel Cowperthwaite returned to Bristol early on the 26th, where about eleven o'clock precise intelligence was received of Washington's success, but no information of his ulterior plans, or whether he meant to push the enterprise further. Such was the exhilaration produced by this intelligence, that it was at once concluded that the Philadelphia troops should again attempt to cross into New Jersey, the point of embarkation being fixed at the ferry above Bristol. Orders were given for the troops to refresh, and be in readiness to march next morning at sunrise (27th). It was noon however before the movement was made, and about one o'clock, after nearly all the troops had crossed the river, intelligence was received from Washington with a detailed account of his victory, and information that he had returned to Pennsylvania.* This unexpected news occasioned much perplexity and a great variety of opinions. It was contended that the motives which had caused the advance movement had now ceased; that there were no troops to support it; that Donop was equal if not superior in numbers, and might soon march back from Mount Holly; that a retreat over the river would be impracticable and its consequences fatal. Colonel Hitchcock was strongly of this opinion, and urged the return, not only on account of the state of his troops, but the hazard of continuing on the enemy's shore with so few and so raw troops. Such too was Colonel Cadwalader's opinion. On the other hand, it was urged that the militia being taken from their families, and kept out a long time without action, were beginning to grow uneasy; that this was the third time they

commanding officer. On all other occasions the troops ever have behaved, and I dare say ever will behave with the greatest courage and intrepidity. The behaviour on the attack of Fort Washington of this very brigade of Colonel Rhal's was the admiration of the whole army."

* It is curious to observe the dilatory process of communication at that time. The details of the attack on Trenton, which occurred on the morning of the 26th, were not known at Bristol until noon of the 27th.

had been drawn out, and if they should return without attempting anything, a general desertion might be apprehended; that our affairs required enterprise, and though the success at Trenton might be brilliant, its effects would depend upon its being followed up; that the shock to the enemy must be very great, and if attacked before they recovered from the panic no one could say to what extent the success might be pushed. The glory and honour of emulating the troops at Trenton were also urged, and the necessity of renewed effort to recover Jersey in order to save Philadelphia. Colonel Reed's opinion to this effect was earnestly expressed. He strenuously advocated the prosecution of the original plan as one that admitted no change, and insisted that, in all probability before this time, Washington, having disposed of his prisoners, had again crossed the Delaware and was acting offensively. At last, so great and apparently irreconcilable was the difference of opinion, that Reed proposed as a middle course, to which all acceded, that the troops should proceed to Burlington, where they could wait for further advice, and thence advance to Bordentown or Mount Holly as the intelligence might direct. Just as orders to this effect were given, an intelligent officer who had rode forward a short distance returned with an account that he had seen some of the enemy's Yagers. This was so important as well as surprising a piece of intelligence that it was necessary to ascertain it immediately, and it was proposed that the Adjutant-General with two officers,—Cox and Cowperthwaite,—in whose local knowledge there was confidence, should reconnoitre in advance. They accordingly set out, reconnoitred the woods where it was expected the enemy were, and found the report groundless. They at once sent an account to Cadwalader, who ordered the troops to proceed.

Colonel Reed and his two companions pushed on to the enemy's outposts, which were about four miles from Burlington, halted at a small distance from the place where the picket usually was, and seeing no smoke or appearance of men, advanced to it and found it evacuated. Upon interrogating the neighbours, it appeared, that on the hearing of the disaster at Trenton Count Donop immediately began his retreat in the

utmost panic and confusion, calling in his guards and parties as he proceeded, and that the troops in this neighbourhood had gone off precipitately the preceding evening, (26th.) Advice of this was immediately sent to Cadwalader, but by this time the day was spent, and the troops having been under arms all day required rest and food. They were near Burlington, where they could be provided with both, and accordingly marched thither, with orders to be under arms at daybreak the next morning. In the mean time Reed and his party proceeded to Bordentown where they learned, that upon the runaways from Trenton coming in on the 26th, the Hessians and their followers, the refugees, fled in great confusion leaving their sick behind them. It was observed that almost every house on the road had a red rag nailed upon the door, which the inhabitants on this reverse of affairs were now busily pulling down. Bordentown bore all the marks of a savage enemy—the poor inhabitants terrified, effectually broken and hardly resembling what they had been a few months before. Colonel Cowperthwaite thence returned to Burlington to let Cadwalader know how things stood, and to suggest to him to push on the troops. On receipt of this intelligence Cadwalader at 10 P. M. thus wrote to Washington, describing the events of the day.

CADWALADER TO WASHINGTON.

Burlington, 27th December, 1776, 10 o'clock.

SIR,

As I did not hear from you this morning, and being prepared to embark, I concluded you was still on this side, and therefore embarked and landed about 1,500 men about two miles above Bristol. After a considerable number were landed, I had information from the paymaster of Col. Hitchcock's Brigade, that you had crossed over from Trenton. This defeated the scheme of joining your army. We were much embarrassed which way to proceed. I thought it most prudent to retreat, but Colonel Reed was of opinion that we might safely proceed to Burlington, and recommended it warmly, least it should have a bad effect on the militia, who were twice disappointed. The landing in open daylight must have alarmed the enemy, and we might have been cut off by all their force collected to this place. We had intelligence immediately afterwards that the enemy had left the Black Horse, and Mount Holly; upon this we determined to proceed to Burlington. Colonel Reed and two other officers went on from one post to another, till they came to Bordentown, where they

found the coast clear. Colonel Reed and Colonel Coxe are now there, and we shall march at four to-morrow morning for that place.

This information has induced me to proceed, though not quite conformable to your orders which I received on the march this afternoon. If you should think proper to cross over, it may be easily effected at the place where we passed; a pursuit would keep up the panic. They went off with great precipitation and pressed all the wagons in their reach. I am told many of them are gone to South Amboy. If we can drive them from West Jersey, the success will raise an army next spring, and establish the credit of the Continental money to support it. I shall write to you to-morrow, I hope, from Trenton.

I am, Sir, your most obedient, very humble servant,

JOHN CADWALADER.

P. S. I have two six-pounders, brass, and two three-pounders, iron.*

After a short pause Colonel Reed went on to Trenton, where he arrived at 2 A. M. of the 28th, and found it evacuated in like manner, not a single soldier of either army being there, and the town in a still more wretched condition than the other. From Trenton he wrote to Washington a hurried letter by express, informing him of the state of things, of the progress of Cadwalader's division, and the retreat of the enemy, and urging him to recross the river, and pursue the advantages already gained. He also represented that there was a great prospect of overtaking Donop, before he could reach Princeton or Brunswick, where the enemy were yet in force.

Washington's reply was received early next morning (29th), informing the Adjutant-General that orders had been issued for the troops to cross the river. Two parties of light troops were, first detached, and marched into Trenton about two o'clock, with instructions to act under the orders of Colonel Reed. They were at once despatched with orders to pursue Donop, and harass his rear, till the other troops should come up. On the same morning, Cadwalader had put his troops in motion and reached Bordentown, whence he detached a party of riflemen to endeavour to overtake the enemy's rear-guard. The pursuit was so grateful, that, notwithstanding the badness of the roads and severity of the weather, they pushed on that night to Allentown. Here they learned that Donop had divided

* MS. letter in the Department of State, at Washington.

his force, sending a detachment to Princeton by a cross road, and with the remainder proceeding to Brunswick. The riflemen pressed so close, that, next morning early, they surprised a party of the refugees, who, supposing themselves out of danger, had remained behind the troops. Six or seven, among whom were some new-made officers, were taken prisoners, and one, in attempting to escape, was killed. This party went on to Cranberry, where, finding the enemy had advanced so far, and that the main body of their own troops had halted at Crosswicks, they returned to Allentown.

On the 30th Washington crossed the river himself, and immediately all the troops rendezvoused at Trenton under his immediate command. On the same morning, intelligence of the position and movements of the enemy being obscure and doubtful, the Commander-in-chief directed Colonel Reed, who was well acquainted with the country and inhabitants, to reconnoitre the advanced posts and gain such intelligence as might be relied on. He immediately set out, accompanied as volunteers by six horsemen, members of the Philadelphia city troop, whose names, for the gallantry of the little achievement which ensued, deserve to be remembered. They were John Dunlap, James Hunter, Thomas Peters, William Pollard, and James and Samuel Caldwell. The rest of the narrative is better told in Colonel Reed's own words.

"We met with little success on our way, or in the immediate vicinity of Princeton, to which we had approached within three miles. The ravages of the enemy had struck such terror that no rewards would tempt the inhabitants, though otherwise well disposed, to go into Princeton on this errand. But it being fully resolved not to return while there was a chance of success, it was concluded to pass on, and even to go round Princeton, expecting that in the rear they would be less guarded. As we were passing slowly on almost within view of the town, a British soldier was observed passing from a barn to the dwelling-house without arms. It being supposed to be a marauder, two of our party were sent to bring him in, but they had scarcely set out before another was seen, and then a third, when orders were given for our whole party to charge.

This was done, and the house surrounded. Twelve British soldiers, equipped as dragoons, and well armed, their pieces loaded, and having the advantage of the house, surrendered to seven horsemen, six of whom had never before seen an enemy. The sergeant only escaped, and reported at Princeton that he had fought his way through fifty horsemen, which was no doubt readily believed. Besides these prisoners, a Commissary was also taken, and from them a very perfect account was obtained, that Lord Cornwallis, with a body of picked troops and well appointed, had the day before reinforced General Grant at Princeton, and that they were pressing wagons to begin their march the next morning to dislodge us from Trenton, their whole force being not less than seven or eight thousand men."*

Reed and his party returned with their prisoners, and this intelligence, to head-quarters the same evening. The next morning (31st) Colonel Cadwalader wrote from Crosswicks:—

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

A very intelligent young gentleman is returned just now from Princeton; he left this yesterday morning, and got in about 12 or 1 o'clock. He would have returned last night, but General Lesley who commands, and Colonel Abercromby would not suffer him to go off. He made his escape this morning early, and informs me that from the best information he could get, there were about five thousand men, consisting of Hessians and British troops—about the same number of each. I have made a rough draft of the road from this place, the situation of the cannon and works begun, and those intended this morning. He thinks there are not so many as they report.

* On the 3d June, 1843, the author was enabled to ascertain with great precision the place where this affair occurred. It was at the house occupied by John Flock, about half a mile southeast of Clarksville, between four and five miles from Princeton, about 300 yards east of the Quaker Road leading from Stoney Brook to Crosswicks. On the east side of the woods, on the Quaker Road, the Americans emerged from the woods. From the knoll on the road they discovered the British party, and by bringing the barn in a line from them to the house, they were enabled to approach very closely without being discovered. The lower portion of the house and the barn are just as they were in 1777. British parties were billeted at most of the houses about Penn's Neck, but must have been withdrawn before the 3d January, or Washington's approach would have been sooner discovered.

He conversed with some of the officers, and lodged last night with them. They inquired what were our numbers. He mentioned about 16,000 from the best accounts. They did not believe we had more than five or six thousand. That many were forced into the service, and that they were deserting in great numbers every day. No sentries on the back or east end of the town. They parade every morning an hour before day, and some nights lie on their arms. An attack has been expected for several nights past—the men are much fatigued, and until last night in want of provisions, when a very considerable number of wagons arrived with provisions from Brunswick. All their baggage is sent to Brunswick, where there are but few men. This confirms the accounts I sent you last night. About fifty light horse at Princeton, one half quartered at Saidder's mill, the other on the west of the town. He inquired if there were any troops on the road. They say there are more on this side Brunswick. Some Hessians arrived yesterday (it is said from Brunswick). I suppose they were those that landed at South Amboy, as I cannot hear any thing of them in this neighbourhood. I received your last letter last night by express. Our spy was near the party of chasseurs when they were taken, and says an assistant quartermaster-general or commissary was with them. The enemy had heard it. Major Mifflin is just setting off with a party of two hundred from Cumberland. Major Nicholas of the Marines informs me that Elisha Lawrence, late sheriff of Monmouth, is now collecting men at Monmouth Court-House; he has got together about seventy men. He has put twenty men into prison for refusing to bear arms. The person who brings the intelligence fled. Major Nicholas is desirous of going after Lawrence's party. I think it is not an object at this time, and have refused the application till I have your order."*

The condition of things at head-quarters cannot be better described than in Colonel Reed's narrative, which will be resumed and continued until its abrupt conclusion.

"The question at head-quarters was, whether we should join General Cadwalader at Crosswicks, seven miles distant, or order him to join the main body at Trenton, or keep the troops divided, and order the division under Cadwalader to fall upon Brunswick by way of Cranberry, at which place it must be supposed they were weak, by the draught of the troops to Princeton; the troops at Trenton to govern themselves by events, following

* Samuel Nicholas, of Philadelphia, was appointed Captain of the first corps of Marines raised in 1775. He rose to the rank of Major, and served through the war. He died in 1790. There is in the possession of his family a Pass from Sir Guy Carleton, dated August 5th, 1775, authorizing Mr. Nicholas, who was then in Quebec probably on secret public business, to return to Philadelphia.

General Cadwalader if he should proceed, or, if he did not, the whole to retire before the enemy until they could be covered in their embarkation across the river by the galleys, which more moderate weather now permitted to act again. The danger of acting in detachments against the whole force of the enemy—the possibility of cutting off the two bodies from each other while acting separately, and the necessity of supporting the militia with more regular troops, were offered as reasons for ordering a junction: on the other hand, the taking the enemy in an unguarded and unexpected point, capturing the whole baggage, and releasing General Lee, then a prisoner at Brunswick, were offered as reasons for a march to that place; but the former opinion prevailed, and orders were sent to General Cadwalader, on the last of December, to join the main body at Trenton as soon as possible. The calling in his outposts and advanced guards from Allentown and elsewhere, took up some time; but on the 2d of January, (Thursday,) they marched into Trenton, by which time the intentions of the enemy were fully ascertained, and small parties of their horse appeared on the road between Princeton and Trenton. On the 2d of January in the morning, certain advice came of the approach of the enemy. The main body of the army then lying at Trenton, and the advance in a wood a few miles on the road towards Princeton, with a creek called the Shabbocunk in front, it then became necessary to consider whether to wait for the enemy on the high ground near the town, or retire over the bridge in the town, and take the advantageous ground on the east side of the Assanpink, a creek which runs through the town, and over which is a narrow stone bridge, the water for some distance above the bridge not being fordable, and the high ground on the east side below the bridge giving the advantage of ground to the defendants. Before this was determined, as I was perfectly acquainted with the country, I suggested to General Washington that, should the enemy divert us in front, and throw a body of troops over the Assanpink a few miles up where there were several fords, the American army would be completely enclosed, with the river Delaware in their rear, over which there would be neither time nor means of crossing.

This intelligence appeared so important to him, that he directed me to proceed to that quarter with all possible despatch, and assuring me that he would immediately despatch a body of troops to act as occasion might require. The danger of the left flank being turned by the enemy, now in great force, and the superior advantages of the ground on the east side of the bridge, with the creek in front, induced General Washington to fix upon that as the ground where he would meet the enemy if they advanced. About 12 o'clock, the enemy made a halt on the north side of the Shabbocunk, about three miles from Trenton; but soon after pressing on with great rapidity, they crossed the creek, driving our riflemen and small parties before them, until they reached the high ground near the town, where several of the battalions were drawn up, and checked their advance.* In the mean time the militia and principal part of the army had crossed the bridge, the enemy evidently attempting to outflank our left, and pressing on with great force, our troops gradually yielding the ground, keeping up a smart fire of musketry and artillery, with some loss on both sides. The German battalion being just then raised, and commanded by an officer who had never been able to divest himself of the ideas he had acquired in the British army, gave way with very little resistance, and the Colonel suffered himself to be taken prisoner when he might easily have escaped by remaining with the troops. The countenance and favour afterwards shown this person by the enemy fully confirmed the suspicions then formed of him. It may be proper now to see what was passing on the right of the army. Having proceeded with a few Philadelphia light-horse to examine the fords, I found the one at Henry's Mill, two miles from Trenton, scarcely passable for horses, the water being rapid and high. At Phillips's mill, about one mile higher, the ford was in very good order; and had the enemy taken the opportunity of passing it, the consequences would probably have been fatal—”

At this interesting point the manuscript in Colonel Reed's writing, and evidently prepared soon after the incidents which

* This was Hand's corps, which had to this time been distinguished in every action of the war.

it describes occurred, abruptly concludes; and we have no memorial of his services during the momentous hours which succeeded, except a reference in a letter from General Washington to the fact that he was at the battle of the 3d of January at Princeton, and was much distinguished.

The night of the 2d January, 1777—the day whose events have been just described—was, perhaps, the most gloomy and anxious that our revolutionary soldiers knew. In a military point of view, Washington's position was a false one. Separated by a small, and, as was ascertained by the Adjutant-General's observations, a fordable creek, from an enemy superior in numbers, equipment, and discipline, and exasperated by recent discomfiture, with a river, impassable by floating ice, in their rear, Washington and his Generals could not but look with extreme solicitude to the chances of the next day. No sooner had night closed than a council of war was held at the quarters of Mercer or St. Clair.* Of its deliberations little further is known, than that the bold project was agreed to, to attempt to turn the left flank of the enemy by a secret and forced march, and fall upon their rear and attack their comparatively unprotected posts at Princeton or Brunswick. This was determined on, and the movement commenced before midnight, as appears from the following hurried letter from the Adjutant-General, the only contemporaneous memorial that has survived of the doings of that night.

East side of Trenton Creek,
January 2d, 1777, twelve o'clock at night.

DEAR GENERAL PUTNAM,

The enemy advanced upon us to-day. We came to the east side of the river or creek, which runs through Trenton, when it was resolved to make a forced march and attack the enemy in Princeton. In order to do this with the greatest security our baggage is sent off to Burlington. His Excellency begs you will march immediately forward with all the force you can collect at Crosswicks where you will find a very advantageous post; your advanced party at Allentown. You will

* Appendix to St. Clair's Narrative (1812), p. 242.

also send a good guard for our baggage wherever it may be. Let us hear from you as often as possible. We shall do the same by you,

Yours,

J. REED.

To Major-General Putnam, Mount Holly.

It must have been but a few minutes after this letter was written, that the midnight march of the 2d of January was commenced, the first effect of which was to turn the tide of the war and compel the enemy, in no ill-founded panic, to abandon all their recent conquests, and evacuate New Jersey.

At nightfall on the 2d, the weather was unusually mild, so much so as to thaw the roads, and induce very reasonable apprehensions that they might be found impassable. In the course of the evening, however, a sudden change, such as often occurs in our variable climate, took place, the wind veered to the northward, and it became intensely cold, the roads though rough being frozen hard. A working party was detached to the lower ford near the bridge in Trenton, with orders to continue busily and noisily at work till daybreak, and fires were lighted on the lower bank of the Assanpink near which the American sentinels were to be seen during the night. The scheme was completely successful. The army was secretly withdrawn. Mercer with the flying camp in advance, and the main body consisting principally of the Pennsylvania troops, under Washington's immediate command, marched by the road to Sandtown and the Quaker Bridge, towards Princeton. About daybreak they had reached the point where the chasseurs had been captured. Here Washington paused till his column was consolidated, and then pushed rapidly on, their approach being yet undiscovered. After crossing Stoney Brook,* the Americans pursued its bank till they reached a blind road at the edge of the wood below the Meeting-House, by which, according to the information of the guides, there was a more direct and less exposed route to Princeton than by the main road still some distance in advance. The main body defiled on this

* Within half a mile of the present canal.

road to the right, while Mercer with his brigade, composed principally of the remains of the Delaware and Maryland regiments, pushed on along the creek to take possession and if possible destroy the bridge,—over Stoney Brook,—by which Lord Cornwallis's approach, should he have taken the alarm, might be obstructed.

The British troops at Princeton consisting of the 17th, 40th, and 55th Regiments, wholly unsuspicuous of the near approach of an enemy, had been put in motion at an early hour to join Lord Cornwallis at Trenton. But one regiment, (17th,) commanded by Colonel Mawhood had, however, actually marched. At daybreak it had reached Cochrane's house, a short distance from the bridge over Stoney Brook, and in the first light of the morning the two advancing parties, Mawhood's regiment and Mercer's brigade, discovered each other. Mawhood, after a moment's halt on the hill, made a rapid retrograde movement, crossing the bridge and pushing back to join the other regiments supposed to be approaching from Princeton. Mercer immediately moved to the right so as to intercept him, and gain the rising ground near Clark's house. The Americans having a shorter distance to march, reached their position sooner than the enemy and formed behind a hedge fence in front of the house. The action immediately began with great spirit. At the first fire Mercer's horse was disabled. One of his colonels was mortally wounded, and carried to the rear. This caused a momentary confusion and the American line broke. Captain Neal who was in command of the artillery was killed, and while Mercer on foot was endeavouring to rally his men and to form his troops so as to cover his flank by Clark's house and barn, the enemy made the charge in which Mercer was bayoneted and left on the field.

Immediately on the sound of the firing reaching Washington, who was pushing on towards Princeton, he detached a body of the Pennsylvania militia to the left, and with them hastened to sustain Mercer. He reached the rising ground beyond the wood in time to witness the first retreat of this corps. The Pennsylvanians were formed under cover of the wood, and becoming, in the true restlessness of raw troops,

impatient under the fire of Mawhood's artillery, moved rapidly in advance beyond the cover. Washington rode hastily by them, waving his hat and calling to them to maintain their ground. He then rode forward under the fire of the enemy's battery to rally the remnant of Mercer's detachment, his artillery forming on the brow of the little ridge near the wood. At this moment the 7th Virginia regiment came rapidly up from the wood, and forming on the right of the Pennsylvanians, the whole moved forward with a loud cheer. The conflict was short and severe, and the British in their turn broke and retreated. Washington, leaving a party to break down the bridge, and sending orders to St. Clair to continue the advance to Princeton, went with a detachment of cavalry in rapid pursuit of the fragments of Mawhood's regiment now completely dispersed. The fate of the day was thus decided. The other British regiments, after a moment's stand, and the interchange of a few shots with St. Clair's advance guard near the College, fled in disorder to Brunswick. Princeton was immediately taken possession of by the Americans. Such was the fatigue, however, of the troops, they not having slept for two nights, or had anything to eat since the morning before, it became necessary to relinquish the movement against Brunswick, and to withdraw the army first to Kingston and then to Pluckemin, whence on the 5th, Washington wrote his despatch to Congress informing them of his success.*

On the first retreat of Mawhood's regiment, Mercer was found on the field in a state of entire insensibility, the combined effect of the cold and his wounds, and carried by his Aid Major Armstrong† to Thomas Clark's house in the rear. Here he was nursed with all the care which tenderness could bestow. Two young Quaker women, who had not fled at the terrors of a neighbouring field of battle, watched by the bedside of the dying soldier. Armstrong was applying such remedies as were at hand to Mercer's numerous and ghastly wounds, when a large party of the enemy, believed to be Lord Cornwallis or General Lesley's vanguard, retreating from Maidenhead and

* *Sparks's Washington*, v. p. 258.

† Secretary of War in 1814. See note *supra*, p. 226.

Trenton, was discovered rapidly approaching. Armstrong and his party were peremptorily ordered by Mercer to leave him and join the army. They barely had time to do so when the house was surrounded and Mercer was again a prisoner.* On hearing the sound of cannon in his rear, Lord Cornwallis had discovered at daybreak the military stratagem of which he had been the victim. Calling in his guards he began his retreat with such rapidity that he reached Brunswick the same evening, his advance entering the lower end of Princeton about the same time that Washington's rear-guard quitted the town.

This may be said to have ended the winter campaign of 1776; the Americans taking position at Morristown and the British having their head-quarters at New Brunswick, with no advanced posts beyond the Raritan, across which in the early part of December Washington had fled before Lord Cornwallis; and thus in the short space of less than one month was the whole aspect of affairs changed. The contrast is very striking. "Perhaps," Washington wrote from Trenton as late as the 12th of December, "Congress may have some hope or prospect of reinforcement. I have no intelligence of the sort, and wish to be informed. Our little handful is daily decreasing by sickness and other causes; and without aid—without considerable succours and exertions on the part of the people, what can we reasonably look for or expect but an event that will be severely felt by the common cause, and will wound the heart of every virtuous American, the loss of Philadelphia." On the 7th of January, so complete was the change in his hopes and prospect, he wrote a hurried letter to General Lincoln on the North River, "Move down with your troops towards New York, draw the attention of the enemy to that quarter, and if they do not throw a considerable body back again you will in all probability carry the city, or at least blockade them in it. I have only to beg of you to be as expeditious as possible in moving forward, for the sooner a panic-struck enemy is followed the

* Mercer languished for a day or two. His body was brought to Philadelphia and buried in Christ Church yard, whence on the 26th November, 1840, it was disinterred and removed with appropriate honour to the Laurel Hill Cemetery. A monument is there erected by the St. Andrew's Society.

better. If we can oblige them to evacuate Jersey, we must drive them to the utmost distress."

In producing this result none of Washington's fellow-soldiers rendered more signal and substantial service than the volunteers from Philadelphia and its immediate neighbourhood, who repairing to his standard at the period of his greatest depression, remained with him till all actual peril was over, and until the army retired to winter quarters at Morristown.

The following letters from General Washington to Colonel Reed, the latter having temporarily left Camp on its retirement to Morristown, belong to the narrative of this campaign.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Morristown, Jan. 14, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

I very much approve of your visiting General Putnam, as I cannot account for his remaining at Crosswicks instead of removing to Princeton, as I have desired in several of my letters. I would have him keep nothing at Princeton (except two or three days' provisions) but what can be moved off at an hour's warning; in that case, if good scouting parties are kept constantly out, no possible damage can happen to the troops under his command, who are to retreat in case they are compelled to leave Princeton towards the mountains, so as to form a junction with the army under my immediate command. This will serve as a direction to him in removing the stores, if any yet remain at Princeton.

I would have no time lost in drawing the flour from the mills on Millston, least the enemy should attempt and avail themselves of it. I would also have General Putnam draw his forage as much as possible from the vicinity of Brunswick, that the enemy may thereby be distressed; the inhabitants of that district should be compelled to bring it in.

The two companies under the command of Colonel Durkee, aided by the militia in that quarter, should be constantly harassing the enemy about Bound Brook and the west side of Brunswick, (Raritan I mean). I have directed General Sullivan to do the like on the quarter next him. Particular attention should be paid to the surgeon sent by Lord Cornwallis (by my consent) to take charge of their wounded at Princeton. He will more than probably convey a true account of your numbers (which ought to be a good deal magnified) at Princeton, and give other useful knowledge of your situation. If therefore the wounded are in a condition to remove, would it not be best to send them to Brunswick with the surgeon? If any of them or their attendants have been considered and properly were prisoners to us for an equal number to be demanded in lieu.

I have inclosed General Howe a copy of Mr. Yates's declaration, and have remonstrated sharply on the treatment of our prisoners. What have you done with the negro you apprehended? The wagon with the ammunition and watch coats I am obliged to you for taking care of—it is not yet arrived. In what manner did Colonel Quick's militia leave the rangers? In the field? runaway? If so they ought to be punished or shamed.

I recollect my approving of Windway laying of the Roads between Brunswick and Amboy. I must beg the favour of Colonel Cox in your absence to continue the pursuit after intelligence. Would it not be well for the militia under Colonel Mehelm to unite with the Rangers for the purpose of keeping out constant scouts to annoy and harass the enemy in manner before mentioned? I ask for information, as I would not suffer a man to stir beyond their lines nor suffer them to have the least intercourse with the country.

I am, dear sir,

Your obedient and affectionate,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON TO REED.

Morristown, Jan. 15th, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

The inclosed was intended to have gone by the express who brought me your last letter. He came in the evening of the 13th, was desired to call early next morning, and I have never seen or heard of him since. Many days ago I wrote to General Putnam (supposing him to be at Princeton) to have the stores rescued from the hands of the militia who had borne them off, and had no doubt but he had done it. What in the name of Heaven he can be doing at Crosswicks I know not, after my repeated wishes to hear of him at Princeton. Surely he is there by this time. In that case desire him from me to use every possible means to recover the stores and bring the authors to punishment, especially Colonel Chambers, to whom I have written on this subject. I will speak to the Quartermaster-General for a person to be sent on this business, but I apprehend from what I heard him say yesterday, that he has nobody to spare, not being able to carry on his business here for want of Biddle* and Major Mifflin, who are both absent sick.

If the militia cannot be prevailed upon to restrain the foraging parties and to annoy and harass the enemy in their excursions and upon a march, they will be of very little use to us, as I am sure they can never be brought fairly up to an attack in any serious matter. When you see General Mercer be so good as to present my best wishes and congratulations (if the state of his health will admit of it) on his recovery from death. You may assure him that nothing but the confident assertions to me that he was either dead or within a few minutes of dying, and that he was put into as

* Clement Biddle, of Philadelphia.

good a place as I could remove him to, prevented my seeing him after the action and pursuit at Princeton.*

My compliments also, if you please, to Colonel Coxe, from whom I shall expect a continuation of such intelligence as occurs, and he is able to procure.

Yours, &c.,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S. The letter to Colonel Chambers you will have sent; it is open for your perusal.

* Washington at Morristown did not know of Mercer's death, ten days before, at Princeton.

CHAPTER XV.

1777.

Washington at Morristown—Reed elected a Brigadier-General by Congress—Command of cavalry—Letter to a Member of Congress on the disorganization of the Army—Appointed Chief Justice of Pennsylvania—Declines the office—The British army lands at the head of Elk—Battle of Brandywine—Approach of the British—Reed's letters to Washington—The British enter Philadelphia, 26th September, 1777.

ONE of Washington's first cares on taking post at Morristown was to urge upon Congress the appointment of additional general officers, and on the 22d of January he thus referred to his Pennsylvania fellow-soldiers. "On whom your choice will or ought to light, I cannot undertake to say. In a former letter I took the liberty of submitting to the consideration of Congress the propriety of appointing out of each State brigadiers to command the troops of that state, thinking as a distinction is now fixed, a spirit of emulation might arise by this means. At any rate I shall take the liberty of recommending General Cadwalader as one of the first of the new appointments. I have found him a man of ability, a good disciplinarian, firm in his principles, and of intrepid bravery. I shall also beg leave to recommend Colonel Reed to the command of the horse, as a person in my opinion in every way qualified; for he is extremely active and enterprising, many signal proofs of which he has given this campaign. For the rest the members of Congress can judge better than I can."*

On the 21st of February, Congress elected ten brigadiers, but took no order with reference to the separate command of

* *Sparks's Washington*, ix. 292.

the Horse, for which Washington had specially recommended Colonel Reed. Colonel Cadwalader declined an appointment as Brigadier. In April, Colonels Hand, Scott and Learned were chosen. On the 12th of May, Colonel Reed was elected, and on the 27th, Congress resolved, that General Washington should be empowered to give the command of the light horse to one of the Generals already appointed. On the day he received this Resolution, Washington carried into effect his long-cherished wishes, and thus wrote to Mr. Reed :—

Middlebrook, 29th May, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

Congress having empowered me, by a Resolve, transmitted this morning, to assign one of the Generals already appointed, to the command of the light horse, I mean that you should act in that line if agreeable to yourself, and I wish you in that case to repair to camp as soon as you can.

I am, dear sir, with esteem, &c.,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Colonel Reed.

Again on the 14th of June, finding that Reed hesitated, he said :

"I sincerely wish that you may accept the appointment of Congress, and the post I am desirous of placing you in, and must beg to be favoured with an answer immediately on the subject as the service will not admit of delay. A general officer in that department would not only take off a great deal of trouble from me, but be a means of bringing the regiments into order and service with much more facility than it is in my power, divided as they are, possibly to do. Mr. Peters waiting, obliges me to conclude, and I do it with great truth, dear sir, your obedient and affectionate servant, &c."

After these kind and flattering solicitations, it was with sincere and unaffected reluctance that Mr. Reed felt himself constrained to decline the appointment, having however determined, as will appear when the correspondence is resumed, to join the Commander-in-chief as a volunteer without rank or pay so soon as active military operations should recommence. In his letter to Washington, announcing his decision, private reasons are mainly assigned for it, though there is a distinct allusion to a sense of injury done by the dilatory and offensive course which he thought Congress had pursued. The truth is, that body was then infected with the incipient hostility to

Washington and his friends, which was developed in all its malignity in the following year. As affecting General Reed, it was further aggravated by a rumour sedulously circulated that during the previous campaign he had, in the free expression of sentiment, done wilful injustice to the New England troops. There was no action on Washington's recommendation of the 22d January, as has been stated, until the last of May, and even then, Congress seemed to evade making a selection themselves, but referred it to Washington. On 24th May, Washington wrote to Colonel Moylan: "If Congress have it not in contemplation to appoint a General of Horse but leave it to me to assign one of the Brigadiers already appointed to that command, I shall assuredly place General Reed there, as it is agreeable to my own recommendation and original design; of this please in my name inform him, but add, as it would not be agreeable to me, and I am sure could not be so to him, to be placed in a situation that might be the standing of a day only, I could wish to know what the views of Congress are on this head, which Mr. Thomson or any of the members I suppose could inform. I would have written to General Reed myself on this subject, and other matters, but my extreme hurry will not permit me to do it, and therefore I decline it altogether; be so obliging as to offer my best regards to him, and assure him that I read his name in the appointment of Brigadiers with great pleasure."

"Having occasion to write to Congress by this day's post, I will request a determination of the matter mentioned in this letter respecting the commanding officer of the Horse, that I may know on what ground to act."

There is among Mr. Reed's papers the rough draught of a letter, addressed to some member of Congress, which very strongly expresses his feelings on this subject. An extract has already been made from this letter.* The rest of it is as follows:—

* *Supra*, p. 240.

DEAR SIR,

The delegation in Congress from Pennsylvania having been lately changed, the uncertainty of a letter finding either a new or an old member has induced me to trouble you on this occasion. I hope you will excuse the liberty, and believe me when I assure you that I shall with pleasure embrace every opportunity to show how much I value your friendship and esteem. It is not at all necessary that I should enter into a detail of the circumstances and accidents by which I was gradually drawn from civil life into the military, nor need I tell you that I relinquished domestic comforts, private emolument, and the fairest prospects of those honours which my partial fellow-citizens and countrymen could bestow, to assist in forming our infant army and lighten the burthen which pressed so heavily on one of the best of men. I can with great sincerity assure you that a disinterested love of my country, and attachment to him were my only motives, and I have on many occasions received the strongest proofs of his sense of my zeal and services. The first campaign I served as secretary to the General, without desiring any military rank, and upon pay too inconsiderable to be mentioned in comparison with what I then received from a very lucrative practice. I continued in this office till a gentleman in every respect acceptable arrived and facilitated my return to my family. I was again drawn from private life by the solicitations of the General, and several members of Congress, to accept the office of Adjutant-General. A little acquaintance with history, some observation and experience suggested to me the difficulty of executing this office with fidelity to the public, and ease and safety to myself, but my objections were all overruled, and I entered upon it with extreme reluctance.

He thus continues :

Allow me to say, Sir, that in my poor opinion there is nothing more likely to mislead the members of your body than the representations which some men make, in what they call private letters, but which are designed to operate upon public conduct. The honest man will think it unjust to make a charge which the party had not an opportunity to answer. The man of honour and the soldier will despise it as unworthy that open frankness which ought to distinguish his character. What secret purposes the malicious, ambitious, and designing may have, those who are at a distance from the army can hardly judge. But least of all are they worthy of notice who, absenting themselves from the army in its difficulties, know not the subversion and latitude of abuse which such seasons afford, nor the super-added labour which their absence at such times brings on those who continue in their duty.

The last campaign was in all respects a very difficult and dangerous one. I pray most ardently we may never see such another, and now that the army is raised on a different footing I trust we never shall. It must be evident to every one of the smallest experience that the plan of temporary

enlistments and appointments to office by popular assemblies are incompatible with the discipline and subordination necessary to give vigour and efficacy to an army. I have the satisfaction of reflecting that during my continuance in office the army never was surprised, (for Long Island was a separate command, and I was not there till I accompanied the General,) that I never was absent one hour from duty during the whole summer, fall and winter, till sent to stir up the militia of Jersey; that though supposing the campaign over, I had resigned, yet finding my mistake, returned immediately to the army, and from my knowledge of the country contributed in some degree to its success; that I never spared my person when exposing it was of the least benefit. When I reflect upon these things, I flatter myself that those whom I have served will consider my character collectively, and excuse any inadvertencies which haste, zeal and anxiety for consequences may have occasioned in times the most perilous and critical.*

I have taken up thus much of your time, my dear Sir, in vindication of my character, which I have reason to believe has been aspersed by some of these private correspondents of members of Congress, and particularly from Connecticut. You will please to make that use of it which your good judgment will suggest, and which you may think my character requires. I shall only therefore trouble you with one remark further. That if I had any prejudices or predilections, they were in favour of a people by whom now my reputation is most likely to suffer, my education, religious profession, politics, and connexions led me to what some of my friends thought an indiscreet zeal in their behalf. To what, therefore, a change in me is to be attributed, I must leave you to judge. Sure I am that, unless there is a happier choice of officers, or more discipline and subordination, my country will have more reason to lament than I have to complain.

I now proceed to what has chiefly led me to address you at this time. Upon my signifying to the General my intention of resigning, he proposed to me to recommend me to Congress for the command of the cavalry. As that is a line of service not liable in my opinion to the same difficulties as the other, I acquiesced in the recommendation and have been waiting the result. So much time having elapsed, I think it probable that some difficulties may have arisen between the inclination of Congress and their complaisance to the General's recommendation, an embarrassment from which I ought to relieve them, as I am informed in no instance has any request or recommendation from him been slighted or refused. I should be sorry that this should happen with respect to me, and equally so that the inclinations of Congress should be forced. Any claims or pretensions I may have, were they much

* Colonel Reed resigned his post of Adjutant-General to the Commander-in-chief, who appointed George Weedon pro tempore. In February, Weedon was made a Brigadier. Congress wished General Gates to resume the place, which he declined. They then recommended Colonel William Lee to Washington. On 30th March, it was offered to Pickering, who ultimately accepted it. At one time during the vacancy, St. Clair acted as Adjutant-General.

greater than they are, ought not to disturb the harmony which ought to exist between the civil and military powers. I feel myself too inconsiderable to think I make any sacrifice by this declaration. Many, I doubt not, may be found equal to the post, and in whom all favour may centre. Should my apprehension on this subject be well founded, you will make such use of this letter as will obviate any difficulties. At all events, I believe you will think with me that the appointment ought to be made as soon as possible, both as it respects the public and the gentleman himself. In a service so entirely new, there is much to be learned, and preparation to be made, and from the situation and views of the enemy, they will give us as little time as possible.

On Mr. Reed's declining the cavalry command, General Washington appears for a time to have made no further effort to fill it, content to throw the responsibility back on Congress, who, on the 5th of September, elected Count Pulaski.

Whilst Congress was thus hesitating with respect to military promotion, the State of Pennsylvania conferred on General Reed new and unexpected honour. He was, on the 20th March, 1777, by a unanimous vote of the Executive Council, elected the first CHIEF JUSTICE under the new Government. The student who is familiar with the judicial history of the Province, and the eminence of the distinguished men who had adorned the bench under the Proprietary Government, will appreciate the honour thus conferred. It was the result of no political chance, Mr. Reed being, at the time, known to be opposed to the dominant party, and to hold opinions adverse to the Constitution of Government then established. This honour he also declined, and his letter to the Council on this subject contains his reasons for a decision, to which he no doubt reluctantly arrived. It is an important paper, as illustrative of opinions, which it will become necessary, in the course of this memoir, more minutely to develope, in relation to the political contests, which then, and for a long series of years, distracted the State. It was presented in person, to the Council, on the 23d of July, 1777. It is as follows:

TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF PENNSYLVANIA.

GENTLEMEN,

I feel myself too sensibly obliged by the honour you have done me, in nominating me to a very important office in this State, not to wish to convey my sentiments to you upon it, with all possible gratitude and respect. No temporising motives or political fears have prevented an earlier determination, but a flattering hope of promoting a coalition, and a belief that the delay was not unacceptable.* These having ceased, I can no longer hesitate in communicating my resolution with candour and freedom. I have considered, with much attention, the Frame of Government, which the office in question is to support. I have compared it with those of the neighbouring States, and applied the little knowledge I possess, derived from reading and observation, to enable me to form a judgment of its merits. I am free to declare that it has many excellencies—too many to be hastily and wholly relinquished, much less branded with those epithets, which, in some instances, have been applied to it. To say that it has its defects, is to say no more than that it is the work of men, and not of angels. For I do not recollect any form of Government, which in theory has not some defects, and in practice more. The late Constitution of Pennsylvania was materially different from that under which it was first settled, and the so much boasted one of England advanced by progressive improvement to that state of perfection for which it has been so much celebrated. That a plan of Government formed under many disadvantages, and “upon the spur of the occasion,” should be so complete as to leave nothing to add or alter, could only be expected by those who are wholly unacquainted with the history of mankind.

* The appointment of Chief Justice was made 20th March,—on the 29th it was formally communicated. On the 9th April, the following is the minute of Council, “Joseph Reed, Esquire, attended the Council, and informed them that some conditional engagements with General Washington, which he had entered into some time ago, were of such a nature, that until some movements of the enemy were made, and their designs, in some measure, known, and for some other reasons, he could not, at present, accept the appointment, but he held himself bound to do every thing in his power for the interest of his country, and as the Council intended an adjournment, he would consider further of the matter, and fix his resolution on this subject,” &c.

The coalition referred to in his letter was designed to reconcile by some compromise, the friends and opponents of the Constitution of 1776. In relation to it Mr. Reed writes to Washington on the 29th March, “I make no doubt but common rumour will carry reports to camp of dissensions here, much beyond the real fact. We have a fair prospect of some harmonious measures, and nothing shall be left undone on my part to effect them.” The prospect, however, was soon clouded, and new and fierce contests, to be hereafter noticed, arose on the subject of this frame of Government.

So far as an individual may be allowed to express his concern, I cannot but lament that the Constitution has not provided a more adequate and earlier mode of improving what is right, and amending what is wrong.* If there be any radical weakness of authority proceeding from the Constitution, if, in any respects, it opposes the genius, temper, or habits of the governed, I fear, unless a remedy can be provided, in less than seven years, Government will sink into a spiritless languor, or expire in a sudden convulsion. It would be foreign to my present subject to suggest any of those alterations, which, in my apprehension, are necessary to enable the Constitution to support itself with dignity and efficacy, and its true friends with security. That some are necessary, I cannot entertain the least doubt. With this sentiment, I feel an insuperable difficulty to enter into an engagement of the most solemn nature, leading to the support and confirmation of an entire system of government, which I cannot wholly approve. I am sensible a construction has been put upon this engagement, which reconciles it to any proposed alterations which may be deemed an improvement. But the opinions of men upon such subjects are so various; and in such agitated questions, there is such promptitude to censure, as leaves every gentleman of delicacy and honour much to apprehend. Whilst I entertain the most favourable sentiments of the integrity and understanding of those who act upon this distinction, I am constrained to ask the like indulgence of judgment, and regret that, upon mature deliberation, I cannot adopt a construction so flattering to my wishes and my interest. The dispensation from this engagement just allowed to several members of Assembly, and afterwards to the militia officers, has added to my difficulties, as I cannot reconcile to my ideas of propriety, the members of the same state being under different obligations to support and enforce its authority.†

I have expressed myself very differently from my intentions, if what I

* Sect. 47. Provided for the election of a Council of Censors in 1783, who were to report on the necessity of amendments, and to recommend a Convention to meet within two years to act on them. In the interval no alteration could be effected.

† The framers of the new Constitution, in order to secure its permanence, enacted a series of oaths to be administered, not only to every officer of Government, but to every elector at the polls, the purport of which was, that he would not directly or indirectly do any act or thing prejudicial or injurious to the Constitution as established by the Convention. Part of this Constitution was a specification, exclusive of course of all others, of a mode of alteration at a distant period. Taking into view what was no doubt the avowed design of the Convention, it is impossible to say that Mr. Reed's construction of the oaths was unreasonable. At an early date, however, as appears from his letter, many upright and intelligent men thought differently. In 1778, the Assembly unanimously resolved that its members might take the oath with a reservation of a right to procure amendments, and a large number so took the oath. The Council of Censors in 1783, pronounced this an infringement of the Constitution.

have offered admits an idea of my becoming an opposer of the execution of the present Government, much more to seek its entire subversion. An easy change of systems is so obviously dangerous to all those principles of obedience on which government is founded that I think it far more eligible to supply the defects of that we now have than to substitute one entirely new. If the sense of the people, who have the right of decision, leads to some alterations, I firmly believe it will greatly conduce to our happiness and security. If otherwise, I shall esteem it my duty not only to acquiesce but to support a form of government confirmed and sanctified by the voice of the people.

In the mean time I beg leave to tender my services in any line conducive to the general interest or defence, or consistent with the sentiments I have disclosed. And I shall esteem myself happy if my small abilities, influence or experience can in any respect assist or promote the wishes and views of gentlemen who under many difficulties have borne so great and disinterested a share of the public burden.

I am, with the greatest respect and regard to your Honourable Board,
Gentlemen, your most obliged and obedient servant.

Philadelphia, 22d July, 1777 *

At the time this letter was written, the military affairs of the country had assumed a new aspect. The impotent campaign which, with a far superior force, the British Generals had conducted in the upper part of New Jersey, had terminated, and Sir William Howe's army was on shipboard in the harbour of New York with a destination which, at the time, the Americans could only conjecture. During the winter and spring of 1777, Reed was with his family at Philadelphia, or in the lower part of New Jersey, his plans of life, as we have seen, undetermined. Congress had not then decided on the promotions to be made.

* The post of Chief Justice, in Pennsylvania, has always been filled by men of high professional ability. The first whose name appears in the Reports was William Allen. In 1772, he was succeeded by Benjamin Chew, who continued in office till the Revolution, and it was as his immediate successor that Mr. Reed, at the early age of thirty-four, was nominated. During the Revolution, Mr. Chew was supposed to be friendly to the Royal cause, and in August, 1777, on the approach of the enemy, Congress directed him and Governor Penn to be taken into custody as suspected persons. They were removed to Virginia, but in the following year discharged on parole. He was, after the peace, President of the Court of Errors and Appeals, and died in 1809 at a very advanced age. On Mr. Reed declining, Thomas McKean was appointed Chief Justice, and Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, Attorney-General.

On the 23d of July, Sir William Howe sailed from Sandy Hook, and Washington, believing he designed a Southern campaign, moved back to the Delaware, taking position at his former ground near Coryell's Ferry. Before the end of the month the British fleet appeared off the capes of the Delaware, but without coming to anchor, and upon the exaggerated report of the defences of that river, bore away in what was represented to have been an eastern direction. Washington, who had advanced as far as Germantown, immediately made his preparations to recross the Delaware, when, on the 10th of August, he received information, by express, that the British fleet had been seen sixteen leagues to the southward of Cape Henlopen, steering south. As late as the 21st of August, Washington, at his quarters on the Neshaminy, was unable to discover the enemy's intentions, and whether their destination was the Chesapeake or Charleston. On the next day, however, their plan was developed, and it was ascertained that they had entered the Chesapeake, and had already sailed several hundred miles within the Capes. On the 25th, the British army landed at the head of Elk.

The war thus transferred to his immediate neighbourhood, General Reed again joined the army as a volunteer, attaching himself to the Pennsylvania troops which, under the immediate command of his friend Armstrong, formed a portion of Washington's army. Washington marched through Philadelphia, in order, as he says, to impress the numerous disaffected persons who infested the city, and took his position on the ground between Wilmington and the head of Elk, to watch the advance of the enemy.* Congress, which, the winter before, had fled to Baltimore, remained at their post. Their expectations and those of the country rested on the army, and Washington, with troops inferior in numbers, discipline and equipment, found himself by this very expectation, compelled at all hazards to risk a battle in defence of Philadelphia. The only question was the choice of ground.

No one can read the history of this campaign without being

* *Sparks's Washington*, v. p. 43.

struck with the ‘oddity’ of the military movement by which the British General approached Philadelphia. In the spring and summer he had been at New Brunswick, within sixty miles. Yet he withdrew his army, put it on shipboard for five weeks, at a sickly season of the year, and landed it at a place still more distant from the point at which his plans were directed. The distance from the head of Elk to Philadelphia is seventy miles, and the interjacent country less open than the Jerseys. The calculation however was that the lower counties of Pennsylvania were in great measure disaffected to the patriot cause; and that, even if the first movement on Philadelphia failed, it would be easy to cut off Washington from his magazines at Lancaster, and the supplies from the rich counties to the westward of the city.

The disaffection of this region of country no doubt to a certain extent existed. Mr. Galloway, who was with the British army as a sort of guide, has described it. “General Howe,” said he, before the House of Commons in 1779, “happened to land his troops in a part of the country more disaffected than any part I know. I mean Cecil County in Maryland. At and about the head of Elk, a number of persons did desert their houses and carry off their effects, but not all. After Sir William Howe had advanced into the country from thence about eight or ten miles, as near as I can guess, I don’t believe that I saw in the whole route of the army, from thence to Philadelphia, consisting of at least seventy miles, above ten or at most fifteen houses deserted. I think not so many, but I choose to be under the mark. The inhabitants were found quietly at their homes, and to me there appeared every mark of pleasure at the troops arriving in the colony.”

Still the disaffection was rather passive than active. The inhabitants remained at home on the principle of peaceful non-interference, and the extent of their assistance was, to answer inquiries as to eligible lines of march, and the vicinity of an enemy; and occasionally to furnish from their well-stocked farms and dairies supplies to the invaders. It will be seen, that in precise and accurate information as to the topography of the country the Americans were deplorably deficient.

As the enemy approached, the impetuosity of Washington, no longer restrained but stimulated by Congress, could scarcely be controlled. On more than one occasion during the cautious manœuvring of the enemy in the neighbourhood of Newark and the watercourses of that region, the Americans were prepared for battle. On the 8th of September, after several skirmishes, principally between the British light troops and Maxwell's corps, it became manifest that the real design of the British Commander-in-chief was to turn Washington's right, and leaving him in the lower country, to advance by the upper passes of the Brandywine towards Philadelphia. In the night, Washington withdrew his whole army from their original position, and crossing the Brandywine, took post on the left bank of that stream, his centre being at Chad's Ford, about twenty-five miles in a direct line from Philadelphia. The British army moved steadily on by the main road, and on the evening of the 10th of September was in full force at Kennett Square.

It is not inappropriate in a Pennsylvania memoir to describe minutely the melancholy incidents of the next day, in regard to which much undeserved censure has been bestowed on the generals who were in command. It is the less so, as the investigation of recent years shows that the cause of that day's misfortunes has been much misunderstood.

The reader of the history of that time should bear in distinct recollection, not merely the numerical inferiority of the Americans, but the contrast in discipline and equipment to their accomplished adversaries. To appreciate this more clearly, he may compare Sir William Howe's despatches, in which he details the evolutions of his complete soldiers, with the narrative which Lafayette gives, in his *Memoirs and Letters*, of the grotesque appearance of the Americans when he first saw them, a few weeks before on their march through Philadelphia, with green boughs stuck in their hats, rough hunting-shirts and muskets, many without bayonets, and all of unequal size and appearance.* It was with an army of such men, commanded by inexperienced generals, that Washington was compelled to

* *Lafayette's Memoirs*, p. 19.

risk a pitched battle with the best British and Hessian troops. It is with this contrast in view, that we can look back with admiration at the gallantry of the American soldiery on that day of disaster.

The position of the American army may be easily described. The Brandywine is a considerable stream emptying into the Delaware about twenty-five miles below Philadelphia, having its sources in the upper part of Lancaster and Chester Counties, and its course about southeast to the Delaware. Its forks, known as the east and west forks, are about twenty-two miles from the mouth. At some distance below it begins to be fordable, though in seasons of high water it is a formidable stream throughout its whole length. In the latter part of the summer it is usually very low, and no doubt was so in September, 1777. The American army was posted on the left or eastern bank of the creek, the left wing, consisting of the Pennsylvania militia under Armstrong,—with whom General Reed was—was at the lowest or Pyles' Ford—the centre, under Washington and Wayne, at Chad's, a mile and a half above, where in the course of the night a slight intrenchment had been thrown up, this being in the direct route of the enemy—and the right under Sullivan still further up the creek, as high as a point above Brinton's Ford, or two miles from Washington's position, with his light troops and videttes as far up as the forks, nearly two miles further. A few detachments of very ill-organized and undisciplined cavalry were extended across the creek on the extreme right. General Greene, with his light troops, among whom as a volunteer was the late Chief Justice Marshall—his father, a colonel in the Virginia line—was in the rear of Washington's position. Such was the American position on the morning of the 11th, the British head-quarters being at Kennett Square.

At daybreak, what in appearance was the main body of the enemy, under Generals Knyphausen and Grant, began their advance, Maxwell retiring before them skirmishing, till about 10 a. m., when the British reached the heights on the right bank at Chad's Ford, and appeared in full force in view of the Americans. So cautious and dilatory did their progress seem that

the American light troops, who had once crossed the creek, returned several times, and with great spirit engaged the Hessians under the very guns of their batteries. As early as eight o'clock, Colonel Harrison—Washington's Secretary—wrote a hurried note to Congress, which still continued at its post, narrating what had then occurred, and expressive of strong confidence that the enemy would be repulsed.* Soon after ten, General Knyphausen began a cannonade on the American lines, but made no attempt to cross. At this time the right wing under Sullivan was not in action, and did not appear to be threatened. He had been directed to guard the creek as far up as a ford called Buffenton's Ford, and supposed he did so, and that there were no accessible fords above him.

Soon after eleven o'clock, General Sullivan received a note from Colonel James Ross, hurriedly advising him that a large body of the enemy with a park of artillery were passing above him in the direction of some upper fords, though still on the right of the creek. "We are close," says Ross, "in their rear with about seventy men. Captain Simpson lay in ambush with twenty men, and gave them three rounds within a small distance, in which two of his men were wounded, one mortally. I believe General Howe is with this party, as Joseph Galloway is here known by the inhabitants, with whom he spoke and told them that General Howe was with him."† This intelligence, so far as it went, was strictly correct. Knyphausen had with him comparatively a small force, the main body under General Howe and Earl Cornwallis having, at an early hour, led by experienced guides, defiled to the left, and were now in the act of crossing above by fords, the very existence of which was unknown to the American General. Nor was this so much the fault of Sullivan, whose duty of vigilance might at first sight seem to have been neglected, as his misfortune in having no adequate cavalry at his disposal, and being in the midst of a population which almost to a man was disaffected.

As soon as Colonel Ross's note with the advice of the probable movement of the British above was received, it was forwarded to Washington, who instantly conceived and pre-

* *Sparks's Washington*, v. p. 57.

† *Sparks's Washington*, v. p. 459.

pared to put in execution an offensive movement, which, had he succeeded even partially, would have reflected as much credit on his military character as the attack on Princeton. As a measure of proper precaution,—perhaps distrusting the news he had just received,—he despatched Colonel Theodoric Bland, on whose fidelity and activity he could so well depend, with a party of horse to reconnoitre above the forks. These orders are not to be found in the collection of Washington's writings, but are published in the Bland Papers, and are as follows :

TO COLONEL BLAND.*

Chad's Ford, 11th September, 1777, 20 minutes after — o'clock.

SIR,—

"I earnestly entreat a continuance of your vigilant attention to the movements of the enemy, and the earliest report not only of their movements, but of their numbers and the course they are pursuing. In a particular manner I wish you to gain satisfactory information of a body confidently reported to have gone up to a ford seven or eight miles above this. It is said the fact is certain. You will send up an intelligent, sensible officer immediately with a party to find out the truth, what number it consists of, and the road they are now on. Be particular in these matters. I am sir, your humble servant,

G. W.

Not pausing, however, for the return of his scout, Washington issued his orders to Sullivan to push with his whole force across the Brandywine, whilst in person he prepared, calling up Greene's division in reserve, and despatching a message to Armstrong to cross with the militia below, to attack Knyphausen, and storm the batteries at Chad's Ford. Had this been attempted, though the conflict would have been far bloodier, the result of the day might have been far different. Just, however, as the movement was about to be made, General Sullivan received new and apparently equally precise intelligence, contradicting explicitly the story of the march of the enemy above, and giving every assurance that they were yet in full force in

* *Bland Papers*, vol. i. p. 67.

front. Sullivan, as a brave and faithful officer, could not and did not delay sending the counter intelligence to Washington, who at once suspended the order for the attack. Thus the army remained for several hours, Knyphausen's cannonade continuing, and the actual movement above yet being undiscovered.

Never was a march more secretly or successfully conducted than that of Lord Cornwallis. It was nearly two o'clock before it was known that he had crossed the creek at Jeffer's Ford, and at that hour, having refreshed his troops, he was in full march within two miles of the American right. Colonel Bland was the first person who discovered them, and despatched the news to Sullivan and Washington. A change of disposition was at once necessary. The division under Sullivan marched hastily to the right, and when in the act of forming on the high ground to the left of the Birmingham Meeting-House was attacked by Lord Cornwallis, and a short and bloody conflict ensued. The result is well known. The rout of the Americans was complete.

At the same time Knyphausen, ascertaining that the movement to the left had succeeded, put his troops in motion, crossed the creek and bottom grounds near the fords, and attacked the Americans, who, after a gallant resistance, were forced with a severe loss to retreat.

The militia under General Armstrong at the lower ford were not in action, and being at a late hour apprised of the disasters above, with difficulty effected their retreat, and joined the main body of the army during the night at Chester. Washington retreated through Darby and across the Schuylkill to Germantown, where he halted to refresh his men for a single day, and then recrossed and prepared to meet and resist the approach of the victorious invading army.* The Pennsylvania militia were left at Philadelphia and at different posts along the Schuylkill, at which defences were to be erected, and the following letters, all that have survived these scenes of anxiety

* The effect of the reverse at Brandywine had no very dispiriting effect on the Americans. Washington's military correspondence is filled with suggestions of offensive movements. Attacks on Wilmington and the neighbouring posts were urged earnestly, especially by General Smallwood and Baron d'Arendt.

and popular dismay, show how actively General Reed was engaged, and the agitation and confusion of the scenes about him.* His family had been for some weeks at Norrington, (now Norristown,) about seventeen miles from Philadelphia, and directly on the Schuylkill.

MR. REED TO MR. PETTIT.

Philadelphia, 14th September, 1777.

It is quite uncertain which way the progress of the British army may point. Upon their usual plan of movement they will cross or endeavour to cross the Schuylkill somewhere near my house. In which case I shall be very dangerously situated. If you could possibly spare Cato with your light wagon to be with me to assist in getting off if there should be necessity, I should be very glad. I have but few things beside the women and children to remove, but yet upon a push one wagon and two horses would be too little. Send, if you have them, your gears, as we have some ugly hills.

Affectionately yours, &c.*

On the 16th at 6 p. m. he writes from the Swedes' Ford to Washington, then retreating before the enemy in the neighbourhood of the Yellow Springs.

TO WASHINGTON.

Swedes' Ford, 16th September, 1777.

We apprised you a few hours ago that the river was rising fast and scarcely fordable. The heavy rains since have swelled it so much that it is now impassable, and from the best accounts and opinions it will be twenty-four hours before it will be fordable for the footmen. In my former letter I mentioned by desire of General Armstrong, who came up to this place, that M. Portel, (Du Portail,) has been up, and will lay out the necessary works as soon as the weather will permit. The militia are collecting at this place, and the fords lower down for the purposes mentioned in your last letter. The bridge is fully removed; the boats below the falls (except one at the middle ferry and one at the upper ferry, reserved for particular occasions,)

* Professor Sparks has this note at p. 60 of the 5th vol. of Washington's Writings: "General Joseph Reed assisted General Armstrong as a volunteer in selecting the proper places for redoubts at the fords of the Schuylkill. He was well acquainted with the grounds, and applied himself with his usual promptness and energy in rendering every service in his power. While thus engaged he was appointed a Delegate to the Continental Congress from Pennsylvania."

are also taken proper care of. General Armstrong wishes to know if there is any account from General Smallwood. If one of the gentlemen could spare time for a few lines, it would be very acceptable. I am, in haste, but with unfeigned respect and affection, dear sir, yours, &c.

REED TO WASHINGTON.

Falls of Schuylkill, 18th Sept., 9 o'clock p. m.

I wrote before this day, and have since procured a parcel of maps, which not knowing of this opportunity of being down here, I must defer sending till to-morrow. I cannot help acquainting you, my dear General, that the distance of the army from the city and its [illegible] so remote has given great alarm, and very much discourages the militia, if any real service is expected. I do not doubt you have sufficient reasons for a measure which seems so mysterious, but if you could consistently with your plans disclose them, it would have a happy effect on the minds of the people to put it in the power of those you can confide in to give proper explanations. I came down to this place this evening at General Armstrong's desire, but shall return early in the morning to the Swedes' Ford, where we have the works in great forwardness. I shall take care that you be informed of every material occurrence in this quarter, but cannot close my postscript to the General's letter without mentioning that I have seen an officer of the artillery who has made his escape from Wilmington, who says that the troops advanced into the country are only the light troops and picked men; that they think our army is totally defeated, and that their main body lies at and below Chester, and between this and below Wilmington. General Armstrong desires me to add that he should have consulted you upon the movement he has made, if he did not apprehend that procrastination would be very dangerous, if not fatal. I am, in great haste, &c.*

* Wayne at this time was at the Paoli, whence he thus wrote to Washington—

Paoli, half after 7 o'clock A. M. 19th Sept.

DEAR GENERAL—

On the enemy's beating the reveille I ordered the troops under arms, and began our march for their left flank, but when we arrived within half a mile of their encampment found they had not stirred, but lay too compact to admit of an attack with prudence. Indeed their supineness answers every purpose of giving you time to get up—if they attempt to move I shall attack them, at all events. This moment Capt. Jones of Bland's Dragoons brought in four prisoners; three of them belong to the Queen's Rangers and one artillery-man; they don't seem to know much about the movements of the enemy, nor the loss they sustained at Brandywine, but have heard it was very great.

There never was, nor never will be a finer opportunity of giving the enemy a

All exertions to defend the passage of the Schuylkill were however unavailing. Washington's army was almost destitute of ammunition, and most of the men without shoes or suitable equipment of any kind. On the 19th, he crossed the river, and taking his position on its eastern bank prepared to dispute the passage, but again the prevalent disaffection of this part of the country, as at Brandywine, contributed to perplex and disappoint him.* After making a feint, as if to turn his extreme right or to seize the American magazines at Reading, the British General moved suddenly to a lower ford—Fatlands—and crossing without opposition, threw himself between Washington and Philadelphia. General Reed thus describes it in a hurried letter written on the back of the leaf of a child's copy-book.†

fatal blow than the present—for God's sake push on as fast as possible. Interim I am your Excellency's most obedient, &c.

Paoli, $\frac{3}{4}$ after 10 A. M., 19th Sept.

DEAR GENERAL,

The enemy are very quiet, washing and cooking. They will probably attempt to move towards evening. I expect General Maxwell on the left flank every moment, and as I lay on their right, we only want you in their rear to complete Mr. Howe's business. I believe he knows nothing of my situation, as I have taken every precaution to prevent any intelligence getting to him—at the same time keeping a watchful eye on his front, flanks, and rear. I have not heard from you since last night.

I am your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

ANTHONY WAYNE.

On the very next night Wayne was surprised by General Grey, and his detachment wholly cut off. This was the Paoli massacre.

* On 23d September he writes to Congress (*Sparks*, v. 69): "The enemy, by a variety of perplexing manœuvres through a country from which I could not derive the least intelligence (being to a man disaffected), contrived to pass the Schuylkill last night at the Fatland, and other fords in the neighbourhood of it."

† It is now at Washington in the Department of State.

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

Norriton Meeting-House, Tuesday, 4 o'clock p. m., Sept. 21.

DEAR SIR,

I stayed at my house as long, or perhaps longer than was prudent. The enemy came there in about fifteen minutes after. I have collected a small party here at the Meeting-House, about one mile above my own house; and soon after we took two prisoners, whose information is on the other leaf. Your Excellency will judge of its value. They are so ignorant of the transactions of their army that I could get nothing else from them, though I asked every question I could think of. I shall remain here at present, and watch their motions, though I am puzzled to get persons to carry the intelligence I collect. I am obliged to write in a hurry, and on such paper as I can get, but am, with the greatest respect and affection,

Dear Sir, your most obedient and very faithful

J. REED.

P. S. I have a Colonel Crawford with me, a very good officer, but we cannot muster more than fifty or sixty men.

James Frazer, a private in the 4th regiment, taken at 2 o'clock this afternoon, says that he was one of the baggage guard which moves in the centre; that this morning they received orders to cross the river; the troops he is with are the lowest that have crossed, as he believes; does not know where General Howe is,—who commands the body that passed at the Fatland Ford, or what number—nor where the flying army is. The Hessians are above this,—it is expected that all their army will cross to-day at different fords; great quantity of baggage with this body of troops.

William Conner, of the same regiment, taken at the same time, examined apart from Frazer.—The following regiments are with the body which crossed this morning at the Fatland Ford:—the 4th, the 39th, 28th, 48th, 20th. He believes Lord Cornwallis commands the body which passed this morning, but is not sure. Several regiments which lay above the baggage to which the informant belongs, came down this morning, to cross at the Fatlands. Thinks the Hessians are above this. He heard yesterday morning that some troops were to cross above this. The body which has crossed he understands are to proceed immediately to Philadelphia. He thinks this body is what is called the Flying Camp; he is sure Gen. Grant's brigade makes a part of it. They parted with Gen. Howe on the Lancaster Road, but whether he is gone up or down, does not know.

General Washington encamped on the high grounds to the east of the Schuylkill, not far from Pottsgrove; and on the morning of the 26th of September, Lord Cornwallis, with the

British grenadiers and a portion of the Hessians, took possession of Philadelphia, the main body of the British army remaining in Germantown.*

* From Pennsylvania (Royal) Ledger, 6th December, 1777:—

"Sept. 26.—The British and Hessian grenadiers, with a detachment of royal artillery, marched into and took possession of the city of Philadelphia, headed by Colonel Harcourt, with a party of light dragoons under the command of Earl Cornwallis, who was attended at the head of the grenadiers by Sir William Erskine, Commissary-General Wier, and a number of other officers of distinction, with a band of music playing 'God save the King.'"

CHAPTER XVI.

1777.

Military movements near Philadelphia—Battle of Germantown, 4th October, 1777—Armstrong's letter—Major Clark—Surrender of Burgoyne—Correspondence of General Reed and President Wharton—Plans of Attack on Philadelphia—Fort Mifflin and Red Bank—Destruction of the Augusta—Cabal against Washington and his friends—General Reed's letter, 1st December, 1777, urging an Attack on New York—Head-quarters at Whitemarsh—Letters of Washington and Cadwalader—Sir William Howe advances to Chestnut Hill—Skirmish of 6th December—Armstrong and M'Lane's Letters—Devastation by the British army—Reed elected to Congress—Appointed to visit the Frontiers—The Army goes into winter quarters at the Valley Forge.

NEVER did Washington display a more elastic spirit than after the discomfiture just described. To appreciate the severity of the blow struck by the enemy, the importance attached by Congress and the people to the possession of Philadelphia must be borne in mind. Congress clung to it with a tenacity which actual danger could scarcely relax. It was the metropolis of the nation. It had been the scene of early and anxious counsel. The plans and measures of patriotism had there been watched and thwarted by a large and influential loyal party, who would triumph in most offensive exultation over the expulsion of Congress, and on the restoration of the royal authority. Its loss deprived the Americans of comfortable winter quarters, considered in the military policy of the times so essential, and gave them to the enemy. New York and Philadelphia both in the hands of the British gave them an advantage which, however exaggerated, still was very great. The disaster was thus peculiarly severe.

Washington's first object was to reinforce the Forts on the Delaware, to prevent the approach of Lord Howe's fleet, now known to be coming up the river. His next, to attack the victorious British army in its new position, and by a sudden blow to recover Philadelphia. The military historians of the Revolution have not done justice to the gallantry and brilliancy of this plan, to be executed by irregular and undisciplined troops against accomplished and veteran adversaries. It seems to have been promptly determined on, for as early as the 29th September, but three days after the British advance guards had entered the city, Washington, having concentrated his troops near the confluence of the branches of the Perkiomen Creek, wrote to Congress that, by the advice of a council of war, he was about to move lower down, and was making his arrangements for an attack. In fact, still earlier, the project was thought and talked of, for on the 26th, General Armstrong thus wrote to President Wharton, from his militia camp at the Trapp:*

"The General has sent expresses to Commodore Hazlewood—sent two hundred men to strengthen the garrison at Fort Island, with a French Baron (d'Arendt) to take the command of that post, wishing greatly to prevent a junction of their naval and land forces. I think he has also wrote the Governor of New Jersey. We expect several reinforcements, though M'Dougall's and Wayne's have already joined. The latter, through a late misfortune, is much smaller than we expected. There are still further reinforcements expected. We now draw nearer to the enemy, who, we hear, are encamped on Chestnut Hill. Two or three days' rest is thought necessary for our troops, as I am persuaded the General designs an attack as early as he reasonably can. The event will probably be great either way. Of the militia I choose to be silent, and see what another trial will produce."†

At or before this time, General Reed had rejoined the army as a volunteer, and appears to have been with Cadwalader near the person of the Commander-in-chief. On the 1st of October, the following curious and characteristic letter was written by Count Pulaski to Colonel Theodoric Bland.

* Thomas Wharton, Junior, President of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania, then at Lancaster. Mr. Wharton was a patriot merchant of very high consideration, and the first chief magistrate under the constitution of 1776. He died at Lancaster on the 25th May, 1778.

† MS. Letter.

Head-quarters, Worcester township, 1 Oct. 1777.

SIR,

Agreable to his excellencie's order, you would detach fyftyne good horse very early in the morning to attend general Reed and Cadwalader upon special business. they will find general Reed at his quarters a mile or two to the right of Conner's house. besides major jimpson will select so many Light horses as he can to be Ready to march with him to-morrow, 12 o'clock to the same hour all your Regiment shall joigne at my quarter the other Regimens of my brigade.*

PULASKI, B. G. of Cavalry.

What this special business was, is not known. It was probably to reconnoitre the enemy's outposts, extending from Germantown to the Schuylkill fords, on grounds with which the two Philadelphia officers were most familiar, and to examine accurately the position with a view to the attack then immediately contemplated. On the same day Colonel Moylan wrote to Washington.

"I set out last night between 11 and 12 o'clock, in consequence of General Reed's information that a party of the enemy's light horse had crossed the Schuylkill at Levering's Ford. I met him at Bonner's, and agreeable to his advice called at Levering's house, who had returned last evening; the party that seized him gave him his dismission on the hill leading to the middle ferry, one which he is very confident they crossed; as he is a Whig, I believe he would not deceive me, so that the expedition I set out on is frustrated. I shall send scouting parties from hence round the enemy's lines, and if any intelligence worth your notice can be picked up, shall transmit it to you; enclosed is a paper in German, which was put into one of my dragoon's hands by a friend; he says it contains the situation of the enemy at Mount Airy and Germantown; their picket is not strong at Mr. Allen's, a number of cattle in Germantown thereby guarded; the chief of their artillery is on the Schuylkill Road, their outpost there Vanderen's mill. I believe they are further advanced on that road, as I saw some Hessians this morning half a mile at this side of Vanderen's; they are collecting the grain from every farm as far as the eight mile stone, and are this day expected at Levering's on that business; their parties usually consist of eighty to one hundred infantry, and forty to fifty horse; the party that crossed Schuylkill yesterday were after horses and cattle, of which they collected large numbers."

On the evening of the 3d of October, Washington broke up

* This letter was first printed in the Bland Papers, vol. i., p. 69, published by Mr. C. Campbell at Petersburg, Va., in 1843.

his Camp, and on the next day the battle of Germantown was fought. Its details, once so perplexed, are now familiar to every student of the Revolution, and though its apparent result, by one of those accidents to which the warfare of irregular troops is peculiarly exposed, was disaster, yet the impression which the audacity of the attempt produced, was greater than any single incident of the war after Lexington and Bunker Hill.*

About daybreak of the 4th October, the American advance guard, led by Sullivan and Wayne, broke up the British picket at the head of the village, and pushing on without a moment's pause, having completely surprised the enemy, drove the 40th British regiment and the light infantry before them for a distance of nearly two miles. So complete was the surprise, that the British tents were not struck, nor their artillery removed, both for a time falling into the hands of the assailants. So incredible did it seem that such an enterprise should be attempted, that "even after the firing began from the pickets, an advanced battalion of light infantry, whose camp was not only penetrated but plundered, no credit was attached to it at General Howe's head-quarters."† It was not till after the Americans, under Sul-

* "In this action the Americans acted upon the offensive, and though repulsed with loss, showed themselves a formidable adversary, capable of charging with resolution, and retreating with good order. The hope, therefore, entertained from the effect of any action with them as decisive, and likely to put a speedy termination to the war was exceedingly abated."—*Murray's War in America*, London 1780, p. 434; *Annual Register*, vol. xx. See also *Life of Arthur Lee*, vol. i. p. 360.

† This notice of the effect is from Captain Hale's history of the campaign. Stedman takes the same view of it. Yet in the course of the Parliamentary investigation, in 1779, Colonel Sir George Osborne testified that on the day before the action, Sir W. Howe ordered him a little before sunset to move in front with the grenadiers and light infantry of the guards, acquainting him that he might expect the enemy at daybreak next morning. The firing began exactly at or near the time Sir William Howe indicated. Being cross-examined, Sir George Osborne gave the following very equivocal testimony. *Quest.* "Notwithstanding the information from the Commander-in-chief, do you conceive that our army was surprised at Germantown, or otherwise?" *Ans.* After the information, I was not in any danger of being surprised. *Quest.* Do you conceive any other part of the army was surprised? *Ans.* *I beg to decline that question.* *Quest.* Was it the general opinion of the officers that some part of the army was surprised or not? *Ans.* That is the same question in other words. I can merely add that

livan and Wayne, had passed about a mile below Chew's house, near which Washington and his staff remained, and the advance parties of Greene's division had reached the Market-house, that the accidental and unaccountable panic occurred, which has never yet been explained, and converted victory into defeat. The most graphic description of what occurred with the right wing, or Sullivan's division of the army on the main road, is in the following letter, written two days after, by General Wayne.

On the 4th inst., at dawn of day, we attacked General Howe's army at the upper end of Germantown; the action soon became general, when we advanced on the enemy with charged bayonets; they broke at first without waiting to receive us, but soon formed again, when a heavy and well-directed fire took place on each side. The enemy again gave way, but being supported by the grenadiers, returned to the charge. General Sullivan's division and Conway's brigade were at this time engaged to the south of Germantown, whilst my division had the right wing of the enemy's army to encounter on the north of the town, two-thirds of our army being then too far to the north to afford us any assistance; however, the unparalleled bravery of our troops surmounted every difficulty, and obliged the enemy to break and run in the utmost confusion. Our people, remembering the action of the night of the 20th of September, near the Warren, pushed on with their bayonets, and took ample vengeance for that night's work. Our officers exerted themselves to save many of the poor wretches who were crying for mercy, but to little purpose, the rage and fury of the soldiers were not to be restrained for some time, at least not until great numbers of the enemy fell by their bayonets. The fog, together with the smoke occasioned by our cannon and musketry, made it almost as dark as night; our people mistaking one another for the enemy, frequently exchanged shots before they discovered their error. We had now pushed the enemy near three miles, and were in possession of their whole encampment, when a large body of troops were advancing on our left flank, which being taken for the enemy, our men fell back, in defiance of every exertion of the officers to the contrary, and after retreating about two miles, they were discovered to be our own people, who were originally intended to attack the right wing of the enemy. The fog and this mistake prevented us from following a victory, which in all human probability would have put an end to the American war. General Howe for some time could not persuade himself that we had run away from victory, but the fog clearing off, he ventured to follow us with a large body of his infantry, grenadiers, and light

the officers I conversed with were always well satisfied with the care Sir William Howe had of the army," &c.

horse; I, at this time, being in the rear, with a view of collecting the stragglers of our retreating army, and finding the enemy determined to push us hard, drew up in order of battle, and awaited their approach; when they advanced sufficiently near, we gave them a few cannon-shot; not being pleased with this reception, our pursuers broke and retired: thus ended the action of that day, which continued from daylight until near 10 o'clock. I had forgot to mention that my roan horse was killed under me, within a few yards of the enemy's front, and my left foot a little bruised by a spent ball, but not so much so as to prevent me from walking. My poor horse received one musket-ball in the breast and one in the flank, at the same instant that I had a slight touch on my left hand, which is scarcely worth noticing. Upon the whole it was a glorious day. Our men are in high spirits, and I am confident we shall give them a total defeat the next action, which is at no great distance.*

It was during the incidents thus described, that Washington, having halted in the neighbourhood of Chew's house, sent Colonel Pickering with an order to Sullivan to be cautious, how in the thick fog which hung over the field, he expended his fire. On his return, having been fired on by Musgrave's detachment from the windows of the house, he participated in the hurried military council, at which General Knox's opinion prevailed, to attempt to dislodge the enemy from the house. Gordon, in his History, attributes to General Reed the urgent advice to disregard the party in the house, and push on, to the support of Sullivan and Wayne.† Whether the halt at

* It is not easy, from this description, to ascertain the relative position of the different portions of the right wing of the Americans, nor what General Wayne means by the *north* and *south* of the town. The road through the village runs nearly due north, and he probably meant to describe his position to be to the eastward, and Sullivan and Conway's to the centre, or to the westward. In relation to the latter, the following anecdote is related by Graydon in his Memoirs, on what authority is not known. "Conway, during the action, was found in a farm-house by Generals Reed and Cadwalader; upon their inquiring the cause, he replied, in great agitation, that his horse was wounded in the neck. Being urged to get another horse, and at any rate to join his brigade, which was engaged, he declined it, repeating that his horse was wounded in the neck. Upon Conway's applying to Congress, some time after, to be made Major-General, and earnestly urging his suit, Cadwalader made known this conduct of his at Germantown; and it was for so doing, that Conway gave the challenge, the issue of which was, his being dangerously wounded in the face from the pistol of General Cadwalader. He recovered, however, and some time after went to France.—*Graydon*, p. 279.

† In a pamphlet published by Colonel Pickering, in a controversy with Governor James Sullivan, he questions the accuracy of this statement, and says that when he

the house was, or was not a mistake in tactics, is a question about which military men may differ. It is more than probable that it had little influence on the fortune of the day, the retreat having begun among the troops further in advance.*

On the day after the battle, Armstrong, in a letter to Mr. Wharton, thus describes the conduct of the Pennsylvania militia, on the extreme right :

TO PRESIDENT WHARTON.

Camp near the Trapp, 5th October, 1777.

SIR,

By a forced march of fourteen miles or upwards, on Friday night, General Washington attacked, about sunrise yesterday morning, the British and foreign troops encamped at Germantown, Vanderen's and elsewhere, toward the York Road. We marched by four different routes—those on the left did not arrive so soon as the columns on the centre and right. The Continental Troops drove the principal part of the enemy at Germantown full two miles. Yet, what shall I say, a victory almost in full embrace, was frustrated, but by what means cannot yet be easily ascertained. I think by a number of casualties, a thick fog, whereby not only our ammunition was expended without an object, but it is thought that our own troops had been taken in an instance or two for reinforcements of the enemy, whereby a panic and retreat ensued, which the General could not prevent! Thus may it be said, through some strange fatality (though not the less faulty on our part) that we fled from victory. Another reason was the time spent about Mr. Chew's house, where a number of the enemy took *sanctuary*, and from which a number of our people were killed and wounded. We can yet tell nothing perfectly of our loss, nor of that of the enemy. General Nash's thigh and the head of Major Witherspoon were, it is said, both taken away by one and the same cannon-ball. I should be glad to send you a copy of our order of battle or attack, but have it not here. My destiny was against the various corps of Germans encamped at Vanderen's, or near the Falls. Their Light-Horse discovered our approach a little before sunrise. We cannonaded from the heights on each side of the Wissahickon, whilst the Riflemen on opposite sides acted on the lower ground. About nine, I was called to join the General, but left a party with the Cols. Evers and Dunlap, and one field piece, and afterward reinforced them, which reinforcement, by the by, did not join them until after a brave resistance, they were obliged to retreat, but

returned to Washington, General Reed was not present. The statement and the contradiction are given for what they are worth. If Mr. Graydon's anecdote be true, Reed and Cadwalader were in advance, and nearer Conway's brigade.—See *Gordon*, vol. ii. p. 523.

* There is extant an interesting MS. letter from Walter Stewart on this point.

carried off the field-piece; the other I was obliged to leave in the *Horrendous* hills of the Wissahickon, but ordered her on a safe route to join Eyers if he should retreat, which was done accordingly. We proceeded to the left and above Germantown, some three miles, directed by a slow fire of cannon, until we fell into the front of a superior body of the enemy, with whom we engaged about three-quarters of an hour, but their grape-shot and ball, soon intimidated, and obliged us to retreat, or rather file off; until then, I thought we had a victory, but to my great disappointment, soon found our army were gone an hour or two before, and we the last on the ground. We brought off every thing but a wounded man or two—lost not quite 20 on the whole, and hope we killed at least that number, besides diverting the Hessian strength from the General in the morning. I have neither time nor light to add, but that

I am, respectfully, yours,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Thus ended the affair at Germantown, both parties having met with severe loss in officers and men, and the apparent credit of victory, the temporary possession of the field, being with the British army. The Americans, after a disorderly retreat, took post first near the Whitemarsh church, whither the enemy followed them, and afterwards on the Skippack Hills, whilst Sir William Howe, but imperfectly disguising the alarm which the attempt of his adversary had occasioned, very soon withdrew his posts to the immediate neighbourhood of Philadelphia, which he fortified by a line of temporary redoubts and abattis from the Schuylkill to the Delaware. The intermediate country from the outskirts of the city to Chestnut Hill and Whitemarsh, remained unguarded and exposed to the incursions of both parties.* No mode of annoy-

* Among the Washington MS. in the Department of State are a number of curious letters from "John Clark, Junior," who was employed on very confidential service in the neighbourhood of the lines by General Washington. Extracts from some of these (now for the first time published) will be inserted as notes to the narrative of the campaign, or in an Appendix to this volume. I am indebted to my friend Charles A. Barnitz of York for the following sketch of this hitherto unknown Pennsylvania soldier.

"He was born in Lancaster County; when very young he came to York County, studied law, and was admitted to practice. When the war commenced early in 1775 he went in a rifle corps to Boston as a volunteer—the company was afterwards commanded by Captain Henry Miller. Mr. Clark soon after obtained a lieutenancy, and in 1776 was appointed a major in Col. McAllister's battalion,

ance was neglected by the Americans, and whilst the forts below the city were defended with the most heroic resolution against the combined naval and military movements of the British, parties of light troops, generally composed of the militia, and led by officers perfectly acquainted with the ground, were constantly employed in the neighbouring country, cutting off supplies, and watching with ceaseless vigilance every movement of Sir William Howe's beleaguered army. In these various enterprises, General Reed rendered peculiar service. His correspondence, letters hastily written either to Head-Quarters or to his friend the President of Pennsylvania in brief moments of leisure, will best illustrate the scenes around him.*

TO MR. WHARTON.

Head-Quarters, 18th October, 1777.

I most heartily congratulate you on the glorious news from the northward. General Burgoyne and his whole army on the 14th inst. surrendered

and continued in service until the spring of 1777, when he returned to York, and was married to a daughter of Capt. Bedinger, who was also a revolutionary officer from this county. Soon after his marriage, he again returned to the army and was appointed an aid to General Greene. In February 1778 he was appointed Auditor of Accounts for the main army. He continued in various stations in the army until near the close of the war, when the state of his health, owing to extraordinary exertions and great and continued fatigue and exposure obliged him to retire. He resumed his practice in York and the adjoining districts, and continued until his death in 1819. In 1814, when the British came up the Chesapeake, Major Clark, although advanced in life, immediately repaired to Baltimore and offered his services to the commanding General—he was appointed an aid, I think, to General Smith, and continued until the British retired from the Chesapeake."

* On 17th October, General Washington having heard it rumoured that Congress intended making Conway a major-general remonstrated earnestly against it in a letter to R. H. Lee. Mr. Lee in reply among other things said, "The business of a board of war is so extensive, so important, and demanding such constant attention, that Congress see clearly the necessity of constituting a new Board out of Congress, whose time shall be entirely devoted to that essential department. It is by some warmly proposed that this Board shall be filled by the three following gentlemen,—Colonel Reed, Colonel Pickering, the present Adjutant-General, and Colonel Harrison, your Secretary, and that General Conway be appointed Adjutant-General in the room of Colonel Pickering," &c.

themselves prisoners of war. The present situation of this army affords, I hope, a happy prospect of emulating the spirit and bravery of our northern friends. The errors of the last attempt will, I make no doubt, be a useful lesson in the next, and we have every thing to hope from the spirit and zeal of the officers and men. The army at present lays encamped about twenty miles from Philadelphia. The enemy occupy their former lines with the addition of some works. The fort still holds out, and every piece of intelligence confirms the account of the garrison being in fine spirits, and resolved to hold out to the last. Reinforcements are sent to them. The galleys have also done their duty, and annoy the enemy in every effort to raise the chevaux-de-frise. The distresses of the town increase. Flour in particular grows very scarce. The intercourse with Chester County, which was left open for particular purposes, is now closed, and famine shows itself in every shape.

REED TO WASHINGTON.

October 23d, Merion Meeting-House.

You will before this reaches you be informed that the enemy quitted their post last evening; of consequence the attempt failed; the best account I can get of it is, that General Howe, with his principal officers, came over yesterday, reconnoitred the ground which they were busily fortifying. They immediately ceased working, began to embark, and continued it till sunset, when the last went over. They then broke the bridge, and sent one part one way, and another the other way. The officers attending him said that Red Bank was taken; a sailor prisoner also reports something of the same nature. There was a very heavy fire of cannon and musketry which held from the sun an hour high till quite dark, and was generally believed to be at Red Bank. From the time of the report corresponding so ill with that of the attack, I hope it has not succeeded, and am the more inclined to think so, as the fire of the musketry, from being very hot, gradually decreased to a small scattering fire. However, the event is not yet so well ascertained as to form a true judgment of it. There was a great explosion about 1 o'clock; it is reported to be a man-of-war, but this also wants confirmation.*

Upon conversing with General Potter, I find he entertains a different opinion of the Island from General Wayne, founded on the reports of a number of persons who are acquainted with the subject. General Cadwalader and myself are both of opinion that considering the advancement of the season, no time is to be lost in determining the plan of operations, and as there is a different state of facts, we have concluded to satisfy ourselves

* These conjectures proved to be correct. Donop and the Hessians had been repulsed with great slaughter at Red Bank, and the Augusta sixty-four gun ship destroyed.

fully on this point before we venture. If the advance of the army on this side Schuylkill will give support to the Fort, and afford a prospect of raising the siege, we are much inclined the troops cannot be more usefully and efficaciously employed. General Potter seems confident that with 2000 men he could interrupt the communication between the town and shipping. In order to effect this business, we have detained Lieutenant Watts of Colonel Bland's regiment (by permission of General McDougal) with six dragoons, but we doubt whether that number will be sufficient to afford a sufficient number of videttes on the many cross-roads. In a letter General McDougal received from your Excellency this afternoon, you mention sending Captain Lee on this side in order to reconnoitre and gain intelligence; if it was consistent with your other views to direct him to remain with us for a day or two, we think it would facilitate our design. In this case you will please to direct him to come to General Potter's at or near the Fox Chase, where he will hear of us. We shall do what we can without waiting for him, and in the mean time collect all intelligence of the enemy's progress and movements, which we will communicate as early as possible.

I am, &c.*

* At this time General Armstrong was despatched to Lancaster to confer with the authorities of Pennsylvania. On the 23d he addressed to the Council the following characteristic letter :

GENTLEMEN,

By order of General Washington I am now here for a day or two, to lay before the President and Council, the General's earnest desire that more assistance may suddenly be sent him from this State, and also to write and entreat my countrymen and fellow-soldiers of the militia, to view and consider the opportunity that God has now given them in conjunction with the Continental troops of being the happy instruments of delivering themselves, their country, and offspring from the worst of temporal evils. The enemy are now in our principal town, the eyes of America are therefore now upon Pennsylvania, as are the eyes of the Deity too. The militia of New England have bravely advanced and enabled General Gates to gain the most signal and glorious victory over our enemy to the Northward, that for some centuries past has been granted to man? Is not the Divine hand evident in this victory? Hath God in very deed thus plainly begun to work deliverance for America, and will He when the cause is the same, deny us in the Centre Colonies the like blessing? Certainly He will not—if we are not most shamefully wanting to ourselves—but the people must go up before they can expect the enemy delivered into their hands. The winter is at hand, a few weeks, perhaps days, may do the business. Be not deceived with wrong notions of General Washington's numbers; be assured he wants your aid; let hasty strides then carry to camp the nervous, the willing, and the strong; that these may share the honour and blessing which Heaven appears at this time ready to bestow on the defenders of this much distressed and bleeding country. I'm sensible that various

REED TO WASHINGTON.

Blue Bell, seven miles from Philadelphia on the Chester Road,
October 24th, half after twelve o'clock.

We came down this morning to the edge of the meadows and in view of the bank, which is the road of communication; but General Potter with a few horsemen having alarmed the enemy, who were then working at some little breastwork, on which they sent out a large detachment, made it unsafe for us to remain longer on the ground. We have certain intelligence that last night a body of the enemy recrossed Schuylkill at the middle ferry, advanced as far as the woods where all the roads meet, and there remain, how large we cannot find. They are also busily at work on the bridge at that place, which will be completed this day. Our intelligence of the fort yesterday is truly glorious; the enemy advanced with their shipping, whether above the lower frize or not I cannot say, but rather think it was above; however, they have lost four; one was sunk and three others set on fire; the largest was the Augusta, of sixty-four guns. The account from Red Bank is equally pleasing. The Hessians attempted to storm it and failed,

seeming objections and difficulties may present themselves to obstruct your march, but remember what motives of virtue, and the forcible law of necessity will over-top them all; wait not at present to debate with these impediments, lest they weaken the impulse of your minds. Let the brave step forth, their example will animate many. You may come in classes agreeable to the call of Council, or otherwise as you please, only march through your country in an orderly way, and with great despatch; be not encumbered with baggage, as we hope you will not need it; as far as is possible, every man his arms, a blanket and knapsack. Blankets at camp you cannot get any, and of arms but few; please to take particular notice of this. Justice constrains me to add one argument further, drawn from the established merit of our Commander-in-chief. You all speak well of him at a distance; don't you now want to see him, and pay him one generous, one martial visit, when kindly invited to his camp near the end of a long campaign? There you'll see for yourselves the unremitting zeal and toils of all the day and half the night multiplied into years, without seeing house or home of his own, without murmur or complaint, but believes and calls this arduous task the service of his country, and of his God. Who then in Pennsylvania can or will refuse one visit to the devoted man, the servant of all. . . . In some such manner as the above, I doubt not, gentlemen, you will address the persons who can be spared, and are proper for this important service; some good men unfit to march themselves, may assist you in riding to notify and excite others who can.

I am obliged to direct the same letter to various persons, and hope it or a copy will be suddenly sent from hand to hand, for want of time to write as many as I could wish, being immediately to return to camp.

I am, gentlemen, your very respectful, humble servant,
JOHN ARMSTRONG, M. G. OF MILITIA.

leaving three hundred killed, wounded, and prisoners; among the former a general officer, who solicited the command out of his turn. Another principal officer wounded and a prisoner. These accounts we have from several persons who were spectators of the burning ships. Of the other transactions from an officer of theirs, who was last night at two houses where we were this day, and from an English sergeant's wife who was left sick at Chester and is now at Darby. The information farther adds that a second attempt was to be made on Red Bank by the British grenadiers, 2000 men having crossed for that purpose. The Liverpool man-of-war was another of the ships. Seventy men perished in the Augusta, and many in each of the others. As farther intelligence occurs I shall transmit it, and am, dear sir, most affectionately and sincerely yours.

P. S. We are proceeding with General Potter below Darby, to do the needful with respect to the cattle, &c.

Later in the same day he thus writes to President Wharton:

REED TO WHARTON.

Anthony Morris House, eleven miles from Philadelphia,
Chester County, October 24th, 1777, eight o'clock.

I received Mr. Matlack's favour last evening. The intelligence of the enemy's leaving Philadelphia was premature. I saw them yesterday on the opposite side from Beveridge's house where I breakfasted. In order to facilitate their operations on the fort by sending detachments to Jersey and Province Island, they were obliged to contract their lines; according, on Sunday about eleven o'clock they retired from Germantown and its neighbourhood, as low as Peel Hall on the Fall's Road, extending from thence on their left to the Schuylkill, and their right to Kensington.* On this line they have thrown up a number of redoubts, and otherwise strengthened it, so as to enable them to detach with safety. On Sunday we had intelligence that one hundred and thirteen wagons with an escort of 1500 men had passed over the lower ferry to go down to the ships for provisions. General Greene was ordered to pass the river to attack them, but a heavy shower coming up before he reached the river, he returned as he had been directed in case of rain. A council was then held, and a majority being of the opinion that it was not yet too late, General McDougal was ordered to proceed on the same business. When he had crossed the river and passed about two miles, he found the wagons had returned the preceding evening by way of the Blue Bell, and that what was supposed to be an escort was a large detachment, who proceeded no further than Gray's Ferry, where they

* Peel Hall was where the Girard College now stands. "Beveridge's" is on the hill on the west side of Schuylkill, nearly opposite Fairmount.

took post and began to fortify, in order to protect the bridge, which by this time was completed. Upon this it was determined to strengthen McDougal and order him to proceed and attack this body and destroy their bridge. As I had determined to accompany Greene, I proceeded with McDougal. We crossed the river about ten miles from Philadelphia. The whole detachment when joined by General Potter made about 4000 men; though they had marched the night before, and crossed the river twice, they went back with great spirits. We reached the ground about sunrise, and to our great surprise found the post had been evacuated the preceding evening, and their bridge broken to pieces. The detachment, after destroying their huts, works, &c., returned to camp. I stayed here with a small party of horse for some purposes not proper to be trusted to a letter. On the 22d, in the afternoon, there was a heavy cannonade, followed by the hottest fire of musketry I ever heard, and lasted for full half an hour. We suppose it to be at Red Bank, where the galleys lay. Colonel Greene of Rhode Island, with about four hundred men, lays at that post. We have not heard the issue with certainty, but from many circumstances have little reason to doubt but the enemy were repulsed in an attempt to storm it. That they went on this errand we had certain intelligence from town, with the circumstance that the General had promised the Hessian grenadiers two hundred guineas if they succeeded. This day I suppose will bring us the account with some certainty. As to the fort, it continues its gallant defence, and has sufficiently demonstrated the error of that opinion which led to a total demolition of that work.

Yesterday morning about sunrise, a most furious cannonade began; and from the heights of Schuylkill we could discern it to be from some ships, which seems to confirm a report that two ships had passed the lower chevaux de frise. However, the event was happy; for though we were at one time apprehensive the fort was on fire, it proved to be a ship. About 1 o'clock there was a heavy explosion. General Potter saw it plainly, and is sure it was a very large ship, below the chevaux de frise. Soon there was another, something smaller, supposed to be of another vessel. This is the best state of things I can give you, and I cannot but congratulate you and the gentlemen with you upon it. I assure you, in my judgment there is a happy prospect of a speedy and glorious end to the contest. If the fort still holds out, (and we have thrown a fresh supply of ammunition and provisions for six weeks into it,) the enemy must leave Philadelphia. After every species of distress to the inhabitants, without much distinction, Gen. Howe finds himself pinched for provisions, especially bread. The allowance is small, and his troops begin to complain. There being no change in our affairs for the worse, in about eight days I think they will leave Philadelphia. I do not know whether Col. Bayard is with you, but if he is, you will oblige me by communicating this letter to him, as it will comply with my promise of giving him information of occurrences.

For the first time these two weeks, there has been a total silence at the fort the whole morning.

P. S.—*Darby, Oct. 25th, 1777.*—A deserter from the regiment of Sorbery says, that he came over the middle ferry last night with 200 men—100 for guard and 100 for fatigue. No other troops there. Three regiments of British and two Hessian ordered over to Red Bank last night. The Hessian grenadiers lost 800 men in the late attack. Count Donop lost his leg. Col. Minginrode killed on the spot. Col. Shick died of his wounds before he got to Philadelphia. Eight captains killed and wounded. But eighty of the grenadiers left who went on the attack. The Hessians, much discontented with their duty, had no bread for four days—no pay since they left New York. They were out of meat for some time, but got a late supply of provisions from the ships. Their duty very hard—constantly on guard or fatigue. He left his post about 2 o'clock this morning with his comrade, who was retaken. They deserted for fear the regiment should be ordered to Red Bank. The talk of the camp is that the bridge at the middle ferry is laid over to attack the army on this side; that they must retreat in a few days to Wilmington, if they cannot get up their shipping. Great distress for provisions in town. All of those who were able that went to Red Bank to attack the fort on Wednesday, have returned. Count Donop commanded in that attack. He does not think there are above 4000 Hessians now left fit for duty, out of the 12,000 which first arrived, and their reinforcements since.

MR. REED TO PRESIDENT WHARTON.

Norriton, Oct. 27th, 1777.

I gave you a short sketch of our affairs and situation to the 25th inst. The repulse at Red Bank, and the destruction of a sixty-four gun ship and frigate, in their attempt on Mud Island Fort, you must have been particularly acquainted with long before this reaches you. Though I have seen many who were witnesses of the whole, I cannot yet satisfy myself whether the ships were destroyed by the fire-ships sent down, or red-hot balls, but am rather of opinion it was the latter. The enemy had been successful enough to raise the lower chevaux de frise. The gallantry of our brave fellows in the fort has been emulated by the row galleys. Every mouth is open in their praise; and I can assure you, from the best intelligence, that they will come in for a full share of the honour acquired in the defence of the river. I am well informed none of them lay further than half a mile from the enemy, and many much nearer. The sixty-four gun ship, to get clear of a fire-ship, was obliged to part with her stern spring, by which means she grounded, with her stern exposed to the dreadful fire of the fort and galleys, which raked her fore and aft. We cannot yet ascertain the ennmy's loss in that

attack, but as there was a boat alongside when she blew up, we may be sure all the hands were not taken off. Many must have been killed during the engagement, and probably more while they were burning, as the galleys kept up an incessant fire of grape-shot on the burning ships and boats which came to their relief.

In the affair at Red Bank, which the Hessians undertook themselves, from the accounts of deserters and persons who have been in town, I cannot set their loss in killed, wounded, and missing at less than 600. Count Donop, one of their best officers, fell in this business, besides many others of less note. In short, sir, things in that quarter wear the best appearance, and we have the pleasure of reflecting that our preparations on the river have been equally judicious with the bravery and spirit of those who conduct and execute them. The enemy have further contracted their lines to Pool's Bridge, and from thence to the Schuylkill. The Hessian grenadiers having failed at Red Bank, the British grenadiers and second regiment of Hessians have undertaken it; they went from Philadelphia last Friday, but we have heard nothing of them since. On Thursday evening the enemy again crossed the Schuylkill, and replaced their bridge at the middle ferry, which had been laid before at Gray's Ferry. I believe their numbers on the west side of the Schuylkill are not considerable;—various are the opinions as to the design of this bridge. The inhabitants of the town seem generally to think and fear it is provided to favour the enemy's retreat. The communication with their shipping has hitherto been kept from the mouth of Bow Creek, (which divides Carpenter's Island from Tinicum,) on the bank, which they have repaired, and so by the Blue Bell. But whether they will think this longer practicable, I very much doubt.

On Saturday I was in Chester, off which lay the Eagle and Somerset men-of-war, some frigates and transports, about forty in number. None of their people are permitted to come on shore. Wilmington is perfectly evacuated; but their sailors come on shore unarmed at Newcastle in considerable numbers. The inhabitants of Chester County, besides a total refusal of any other than gold, silver, or old paper money, have shown too much inclination to keep up an intercourse with the city. But General Potter has disturbed it in such a manner, that I fancy that the city will derive little or no benefit from it longer. Perhaps you may have seen the enclosed newspapers before; if you have not, they may afford you and the gentlemen of the Board some entertainment. It may also be some satisfaction to know the prices of some articles, from which you will form a judgment of the situation of the inhabitants. Salt, four dollars per bushel, (hard money;) butter, one dollar lb.; sugar, 1s. 6d. lb., or six dollars Continental money; beef, very poor, from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. lb.; flour not to be purchased. I have also enclosed you a copy of the examination of a Hessian deserter, one of five who came out on Saturday morning. It may be somewhat exaggerated, but I believe it is true in the main. Our army still remains in its quarters, about twenty-five miles from town, on the Skippack Road. General

Potter has been reinforced with some militia; his going into that country on the west side of Schuylkill, has had a very happy effect. If one was to hazard a conjecture on the present state of affairs, and the enemy's future designs, I am inclined to think they will make one more effort on both the forts, and that failing, will set out for New York, retiring by land as far as Wilmington, which is strong ground, and there embarking at leisure.* The militia in Chester and the Lower Counties seem to be recovering from their panic, and will, I hope, soon show themselves in camp.

I returned from Chester County yesterday, and have been detained by the rain from proceeding to head-quarters. Should there be any thing there worth communicating, will endeavour to add it in a separate sheet. In the mean time, I cannot forbear congratulating you and the gentlemen with you on the happy prospect of affairs, collectively considered, and to assure you that I am, with much respect and regard, your most obedient, &c. &c.

MR. REED TO PRESIDENT WHARTON.

Head-quarters, James Morris's, 17 miles from Philadelphia
on the Skippack Road, October 30th.

I came up to this place yesterday, where I received your favour of the 22d. I wish I had been here when the express arrived, as I should certainly have wrote you fully by him. You will see by the inclosed that I have not been inattentive to my promise or to your expectations. I went to Chester County last week in order to gain a thorough knowledge of the country, the enemy's situation, and such other circumstances as to enable us to form a judgment what support could be given to our forts, and what interruption to the enemy's convoys and supplies. General Cadwalader was with me on this business. We perfectly agreed in facts and in opinion, that something effectual might be done by our army taking post there, but upon debating it in the council of war yesterday, a majority, indeed, I may say the whole of the officers present opposing it, and earnestly declaring themselves against it, that measure is dropt. It is proposed to change the camp by removing about three miles further, about northeast from this, but from all appearances there is no probability of any immediate action. Time must unfold the benefits to arise from inactivity and delay at this period. I sincerely hope they may be such as to show we were totally wrong in the opinion we had formed of it, when we proposed making an attempt on the enemy's communications. The long residence of the army in this quarter has proved very distressing to the inhabitants, whose forage must be drawn for their subsistence. It must give pain to every man of reflection to see how little pro-

* The original of this letter is in the State Department at Harrisburg. There is some obscurity in the few previous sentences, arising either from the haste in which the letter was written, or an error in copying.

portion the number of militia in the field bear to those which this state can afford; and the coming without arms gives too much reason to fear they have left arms at home, with an expectation of getting a supply of which they will not render the most honourable account. The Virginia and Maryland militia will soon return, their arms will be left at Lancaster; perhaps by application to Congress they might be procured. I think the collection of arms, blankets, &c. very judicious in the theory, I wish the execution of it may be equally so. The seizure of the estates of those who join the enemy is highly necessary, and I think should extend to those who voluntarily serve them as spies, guides, pilots, or execute any other office under them. The burning of the houses of those who act vigorously in the militia, receive stores, &c. is attended with the most ruinous consequences, and ought to be prevented by all possible means. I have mentioned it here, but amidst other business it has not been sufficiently attended to. It appears to me to be the indispensable duty of the board at which you preside to protect as much as possible those who are employed in your service. I would therefore beg leave to propose that immediate application be made to Congress for an instruction to General Washington to write to General Howe upon this subject, specifying Colonel Thompson, Colonel Dewees, and Colonel Bull, and threatening immediate retaliation if any such outrage is committed in future. It is the more necessary, as these sufferers talk loudly of taking the matter into their own hands, and I need not describe the disorder and consequences that might ensue should that be the case. I do not think the loss to the public of two or three houses to be compared to the advantages that would result from a security to our vigorous and active friends against so distressing a calamity.

Letters from the forts yesterday assure us that they are in high spirits, though they expect another attack. We have reason to think Mud Island Fort will be attempted by storm from boats, and Red Bank will be attempted by regular approaches. The troops mentioned in my other letter as sent over there, were only to cover the retreat of the Hessians; they have all returned. A large supply of provisions and ammunition was immediately thrown in. General Clinton is returned with the troops from the destruction of the forts on the North River. It is also reported that the troops from Rhode Island are brought to New York. As I suppose you must have seen the articles of capitulation between Gates and Burgoyne, I need not mention that we were misinformed as to their surrendering prisoners of war; that is not the case. They are not to bear arms against America during the present contest, but to be transported to England at their own expense. Their arms, stores, &c. all given up. Some of the Augusta's cannon are got up, 24-pounders and others are within our reach.

I do not recollect anything farther worth troubling you with.

P. S. Since writing the within, I have a letter from Colonel Bayard, from which I gather that you have not seen the articles of capitulation. I was going to copy them for you, but no copy has been permitted to be taken.

Immediately after this General Washington drew his army nearer Philadelphia, taking post on the range of hills near Whitemarsh Church, and on the 4th November General Reed thus writes to Mr. Wharton:

MR. REED TO PRESIDENT WHARTON.

Head-quarters at George Emlen's, near Whitemarsh
Church, November 4th, 1777.

I have this morning received Mr. Matlack's favour of the 31st October, and also some packets directed to several gentlemen, commissioners under the act of Council for securing forfeited estates. I shall endeavour to forward them as directed, but I could have wished expresses had been sent, as the charge seems of rather too much importance to trust them to common conveyance.

I wrote you last soon after a rain which has been a small deluge. Our army suffered a good deal, but their distresses bore little proportion to those of the enemy—especially of that part of their troops posted in Province Island, and its vicinity. The meadows were entirely overflowed, so that in relieving the guards, the men marched near *breast* high in water. Their bridge at the Middle Ferry was carried away by the violence of the stream; a part was taken at Red Bank, and another at Mud Island. There has been a profound tranquillity ever since the late attack. Scarce a cannon has been heard since. We are informed they are busily employed in constructing floating batteries, and other works calculated for a water attack, which will not be finished before the latter end of this week, when according to the town talk there will be a general attack both by land and water. Letters came from both forts to-day full of spirit and zeal—they have got all the reinforcements they wish, and seem confident they can maintain their posts. General Varnum has been detached to the Jerseys to co-operate with the forts; it is very probable had we provided such a body at the last attack, very few of the assailants would have escaped. Two men were executed at Red Bank yesterday, having acted as guides to the enemy and afterwards venturing out as spies, one of whom before he was turned off, declared he had been engaged to come out by _____, _____, _____, and _____, the late clerk of the market.* The distresses of the inhabitants, especially those of a poorer kind, accumulate very fast. An attempt has been made to give the old paper money the currency of gold and silver, but it does not succeed—while beef is sold for 2s. 6d. per lb. in gold and silver, they ask 4s. and 4s. 6d. in paper. Many women and children come out daily all full of their distress and apprehension.

* In the original letter, the names are given. They are for obvious reasons suppressed.

We have nothing, I think, to fear respecting the forts but a want of harmony between the land and sea officers. General Washington has in the strongest terms recommended such measures as will lead to a better understanding, and I hope they will be effectual. The Randolph frigate has been very successful; in a short cruise she has taken four valuable prizes. We expect very soon a large reinforcement from the northern army; in the mean time the General has moved to this camp, which, though naturally pretty strong, he is strengthening,—in the mean time every support will be given to the forts which the situation of the army will admit.

As soon as anything interesting occurs I shall certainly communicate it. In the mean time, be assured I have a particular pleasure in relieving you from the doubt and anxiety which, I am very sensible, distance and a want of information naturally create.

Rarely has an army been placed in a situation of as great peril as Sir William Howe's, during the few weeks that succeeded his entrance to Philadelphia, and before the fall of the forts which commanded the Delaware, and impeded the approach of the shipping. Without a communication between Lord Howe's naval armament and the city, a surrender or retreat was inevitable. No efforts were spared on either side. The British Admiral exposed his ships to all the danger of a conflict with the forts and fire-ships, much enhanced by the shoal water and uncertain pilotage of the river, in order to force a passage, and time after time was repulsed. Had the Americans obstructed the passage between Hog Island and the Fort, so as to prevent large ships from passing, the defence of the river would probably have been successful. This, however, had been neglected. On the part of the Americans, various plans were formed, and partially executed, to relieve the garrison, especially by recovering Province Island, and taking possession of the batteries which had been there erected, and by which the forts were chiefly annoyed. It is to these various enterprises that the correspondence principally refers.

MR. REED TO WASHINGTON.

Captain Lee's Quarters, near Springfield Meeting House,
six miles from Darby, November 16th.

General Greene will give you so perfect an idea of what he has seen here as to make any remarks unnecessary from any one else. I hope and

believe it is not yet too late to give the forts some effectual relief; but every moment is precious in the present advanced season, and after the injury so heavy a cannonade must have done them. As I know you are pleased with having the sentiments of every person who gives himself the trouble of reflecting, I have no difficulty in giving you mine, as to the mode of annoyance. I am much inclined to think, that, unless the attack upon the works on the Islands, be either a total or partial surprise, it will fail. Should they take alarm at any movement of ours, and throw over a body of troops on the Islands, the approaches are so difficult that I think the attack will fail or at least will be attended with great loss. The late heavy rains have broke one of the dams, and the meadows are much softer than they were when this matter was under consideration formerly.* But I should hope these difficulties may be obviated by General Potter moving down to some convenient distance; a detachment of at least 3000 men moving over to him with artillery, the latter, if concealed by a night march, I think the better. The time of attack previously fixed, and the main body of the army to cross so as to destroy the bridge, and cut off all communication and support, at the same time. Should the surprise fail, I still think the whole force of the army may be drawn to a point so as to make the Island too warm, but I think it will be less effectual, and more likely to bring on a general action, which it seemed to be the general sentiment should be avoided, and which I, also, in our present circumstances, am of opinion we ought not to seek.

P. S. General Cadwalader desires me to mention, that a party will go from General Potter to-morrow, to meet the twelve-pounder and howitzer, which are expected for the purposes General Cadwalader suggested."†

At the time this letter was written and while the plans of relief were in agitation, Fort Mifflin had been evacuated. On Colonel Smith's being wounded, Major Thayer, of the Rhode Island line, volunteered to take command. He kept possession of the Fort till the morning of the 16th, when the guns being entirely dismounted, and the works so completely raked by the heavy artillery of Lord Howe's fleet, that not a man could venture on the platforms, he abandoned the Fort about two o'clock in the morning. No sooner was this accomplished, than Lord Cornwallis, with a picked corps, marched from the city to

* Lord Cornwallis attributed the delay of the enemy, in reducing the Fort, to this cause, "an extraordinary storm of rain," said he, "which broke down the dykes and damaged the works much retarded our attack on Mud Island."—General Grey said the same thing.

† General Washington decided against this plan, and in a letter of the 17th of November, to the President of Congress, gives his reasons.—*Washington*, v. 151.

Chester, crossed the river to dislodge the Americans from Red Bank, and if possible clear the passage for the fleet.

MR. REED TO WASHINGTON.

Lewis Davis's, Five miles from Darby,
18th November, half past 9 o'clock.

Since I wrote you this afternoon, we have got intelligence out of Chester which may be depended on; that the troops at Chester began to embark at 11 o'clock this morning, and passed over to Billingsport with their cannon, wagons, &c. They made no secret of their intentions to attack Red Bank. They gave out their number was 5000, and the informant says there certainly was a great number, chiefly British. They said they would storm it to-night, if practicable, but they were so late, that our informant thinks they could not effect it to-night. He further adds, that troops went from on board ship on the same errand. Lord Cornwallis commands the detachment. We have thought it best to despatch this intelligence this evening, that you may be fully apprised of every circumstance necessary for your Excellency to form a judgment of what may be proper to be done in our present circumstances."**

On receiving this letter, General Washington detached Greene, with a body of picked troops, to reinforce General Varnum, then in command at Red Bank; but so rapid was Cornwallis's advance, and so overwhelming his force, that on the night of the 20th, the Fort was evacuated before the arrival of the reinforcement.

* On the same day Major Clark wrote to Washington:—

A few minutes ago, one of my friends came to me and informed me about 5000 of the enemy crossed from Philadelphia, at the middle ferry; they are on the Chester Road, encamped a few miles from Chester. They have a great many baggage wagons, and a number of field-pieces; one of the officer's waiters assured my friend the whole army were moving on. Others of the privates say they are going to cross the Delaware. They surprised the guard at the Blue Bell, and took a few prisoners, three of ours wounded, and three of the enemy killed, including a Scotch officer.

Generals Potter, Reed and Cadwalader, are now reconnoitering, and expected every moment. The militia moved up this morning to the Square. You will soon have a more particular account. The Light Infantry of the enemy are among the number above mentioned.

I am, in haste, yours, &c.,

JOHN CLARK, JUN.

P. S. I could not procure an express sooner.

On the 25th, General Reed writes from Head-quarters.

TO PRESIDENT WHARTON.

I received your late favour in Chester County, where I went, at the General's request, to explain to some gentlemen in general command the principles upon which a plan had been suggested for the relief of Fort Mifflin. But we were not so happy as to execute it in time, the fort having been evacuated the very day these gentlemen returned, and made their report in favour of the plan. But it is a pleasure to be able to say, that it was held to the very last tenable moment, and that our brave garrison have acquired immortal honour, though success did not attend their gallant exertions. The galleys are not spoken of with the same respect as on a former occasion, and I fear there is ground for it. The Fort was left a perfect ruin, our troops having completed what the enemy's cannonade had left. All the guns, but two, were dismounted. They carried over to Red Bank every thing that was valuable and portable.

On Sunday evening Lord Cornwallis passed the middle ferry to Chester, where he was joined by the late reinforcement of 2000 men from New York, crossed over into New Jersey in order to attack Red Bank. While I am writing, there is a heavy firing, which we suppose to be the galleys and ships passing the city. I fear they must soon fall into the enemy's hands, or that we must destroy them. If any account comes before I seal my letter, I will insert it. We have no authentic account of the evacuation of Red Bank, but from many circumstances we have reason to suspect it. We were guilty of great omission in not attending more to the alterations of the river. Two hulks sunk between Province and Mud Islands would probably have put the city into our hands this fall, and possibly terminated the war. They have got topsail vessels of a pretty good size, as far as Everly's. General Greene has crossed the river with a considerable force, to annoy the enemy on that side; how far he will be able to effect it, time must determine. I am not very sanguine in my expectations, as I think he will be too late for any thing effectual.

The distresses of the inhabitants increase hourly; those of our prisoners are truly piteous. They enlist or perish with famine. Lord Cornwallis's detachment committed every kind of depredation upon the poor inhabitants on the road to Chester. They stripped them of every species of clothing without mercy. And as soon as they landed on the Jersey shore, some houses appeared in flames. I have been since informed they belong to active Whigs. Permit me to put you, and the gentlemen around you, in mind of a hint I gave upon this subject in a former letter.

P. S. Since writing the above, an express has arrived with an account of the evacuation of Red Bank. It does not seem to have been made with as much leisure as could be wished. The heavy cannon are left, the powder scattered upon the floor. The enemy had not taken possession, nor indeed

appeared on the north side of the creek which divides Billingsport from Red Bank. The galleys passed up to the town, with what success we have not learned; they had orders to take the Delaware frigate in their way. Whether they will succeed is doubtful. As I am obliged to go home this afternoon, on account of the indisposition of part of my family, I could wish you had a correspondent to give you the sequel of our Jersey business. Should I return soon, you shall hear from me again. Three brigades of the northern army are crossed and join to-morrow, two others are in their rear, one in Jersey ordered to Red Bank. This will prove a fine reinforcement, as our northern friends show plainly they have taken good care of themselves in the article of clothing. Shoes are much wanted.*

MR. REED TO PRESIDENT WHARTON.

November 24th, 9 A. M., General Armstrong's quarters.

Nothing important has happened since my letter of the 21st. From the last accounts, General Greene with his division lay at Burlington, Varnum with his brigade at Haddonfield. The enemy (Lord Cornwallis) lay at Billingsport. General Knox, De Kalb, and St. Clair, who went over there about the 18th, were of opinion that the fort would not be tenable against regular approaches, and that the galleys would be of no use.† The fort was accordingly evacuated, and the galleys passed by the town in a fog up to Bristol. But on General Greene's passing the river, the garrison returned and took possession, but whether with a view to stand a siege, or wait events, I cannot learn. In this condition things are. An attack upon the city during the absence of this body of troops, has been much thought of, but it has been by a great majority deemed too hazardous. I confess I am of that opinion myself. The enemy have a chain of redoubts which I fear would give our men a check, and a repulse at this time by a part of their army, would be attended with many ruinous consequences. The attack can only be in front, and evry man acquainted with the ground between the Delaware and Schuylkill, will see that five or six thousand men are as sufficient in works, to defend that space of ground, as any number; at least it appears so to me. From my own feelings I can easily judge of yours, and

* On 21st November, General Washington sent one hundred and fifty of Morgan's corps to reinforce Greene. The rest could not march on account of the want of shoes. On 22d, the following entry is made in the Orderly Book: "The Commander-in-chief offers a reward of ten dollars to any person who shall by nine A. M. on Monday, produce the best substitute for shoes, made of raw hides. The commissary of hides is to furnish the hides, and the Major-General of the day is to judge of the essays, and to assign the reward to the best artist."—(Sparks' *Washington*, v. 167.)

† In this there must be some mistake, for on 19th, Washington wrote to Varnum, "Generals St. Clair, Knox and De Kalb, returned to camp this evening. They are all clear in their opinion that keeping possession of the Jersey shore at or near Red Bank, is of the last importance," &c.—(Sparks' *Washington*, v. 163.)

the gentlemen round, at the seeming inactivity of this army for so long a time. I know it is peculiarly irksome to the General, whose own judgment led to more vigorous measures, but there has been so great a majority of his officers opposed to every enterprising plan, as fully justifies his conduct, unless he was to consult them much less than he does. And how far that would suit our genius and habits, I will not undertake to say. The militia I think improve, so as to afford a prospect of their proving in time a very useful body of men. I would add, in a short time, if the plan of choosing their own officers did not preclude the hope. But in every action, in field, in camp, or on march, we have reason to lament that the choice has fallen in so many instances upon improper persons. There are some gentlemen who are exceptions, and would be a credit to any service. I wish the number were greater.

P. S. 2 P. M. Red Bank utterly evacuated and the enemy possessed; Greene at Mount Holly waiting for Glover's brigade; Varnum at Haddonfield. The Province brig—Black brig,—Xebecks, floating batteries and fire-ships deserted, and burned with all their arms, stores, &c. The galleys and our vessels passed up, as the rest might have done, if they had not been panic struck. We have lost great credit in that quarter. At Rhode Island the Syren man-of-war, a tender, and transport ran aground, and have fallen into our hands. A vigorous exertion is under consideration, God grant it may be successful. The Eastern papers relate facts, and speak strongly of a speedy rupture with France. Lord Stormont left Paris in consequence of the contempt shown his remonstrance on the late captures by Weeks and his associates. Our army strengthens daily.

On the evening of the 24th, Washington, having reconnoitred the lines in person, convoked his military council, and submitted the question as to the expediency of an attack on the City. So wide was the difference of opinion, that the council adjourned without coming to a decision, and the Commander-in-chief, despatching a special messenger to Greene to ascertain his views, required of the other officers their written opinions on the subject. The plan, as urged by Lord Stirling, was to attack the lines to the north of the City with the main body of the army, whilst Greene passing down the Delaware in boats, and Potter moving down on the west side of the Schuylkill with the militia, should attack the eastern and western fronts. The result of the final consultation was that by a vote of eleven to four the plan was abandoned.

On the 30th, General Reed again writes to President Wharton:

"When I wrote you last, a plan was under consideration to take advantage of Cornwallis's absence with so large a detachment and attack the city, but upon reconnoitring their works from the west side of Schuylkill, they appeared so exceedingly strong as to damp the ardour of the most enterprising. They have constructed a chain of redoubts on the most commanding ground, extending from the Schuylkill to the Delaware, on a line with Tench Francis's house (the Vineyard);* they are framed, planked, and of great thickness, surrounded with a deep ditch enclosed and freized. The intervals are filled with an abattis composed of all the apple trees in the neighbourhood, and many large trees from the Pennsbury woods. Upon the whole, though I for one was very much for some vigorous measure, it appeared on view too hazardous. If there was an opportunity of forcing them out of the city, I fear it is gone, and that we must lay our account with their wintering there, and what is more painful on reflection, our country will be the seat of war next summer. However, upon the whole, Providence has favoured us so much, that we should be ungrateful to repine. The enemy have made great destruction of the little villas in the neighbourhood of their lines. The bare walls are left; the doors, windows, roofs and floors are all gone to make huts. Not the least trace of a fence or fruit tree is to be seen. About fifteen houses are totally demolished, some in the way I have mentioned, others burnt. The little town of Gloucester was burnt on Wednesday. The same fate most probably awaits Germantown, Frankford, and Woodbury, besides the partial destruction of scattered houses. A great number of vessels have got up to town, but none of the large ones as yet. Whether they have raised any of the chevaux-de-frise, or found a new channel we do not yet know. We have been strangely negligent of the alterations in the river; upon so slight alterations does the fate of nations turn, that a few hulks sunk in proper places would probably have frustrated all the designs of the enemy, and obliged them to evacuate this state. General Greene has not been in sufficient force to see Cornwallis in the field, so that I fear he has had the mortification to be a spectator of distresses he could not prevent. I think it highly probable they mean to establish a post on the Jersey shore to prevent our annoying them in the winter, and open an intercourse with the country. General Howe has given the inhabitants of Philadelphia notice, that the state of his provisions will not admit of his supplying them. In consequence, numbers are coming out, but all of the poorer sort. My absence from head-quarters for a few days past prevents my giving you the latest accounts from Jersey, which is the scene of action. I suppose this week will determine what the army here is to do, for they cannot remain much longer in that quarter, both wood and forage being consumed."

The final abandonment of an offensive movement on the British army, though clearly dictated by a sound military policy,

* Now Francisville, Penn Township, south of the Girard College.

and justified by an almost unanimous concurrence of opinion at Camp, seems to have produced great discontent, not only amongst those who could not reconcile themselves to the privation which such a state of things imposed, but among many gallant men and true patriots, whose craving for action and for constant offensive movements at any risk could not be quieted by prudential considerations. At least one, and probably more of the minority of the military council of the 24th of November gave very free utterance to these complaints. "We have lost Fort Mifflin," Wayne wrote to Gates about this time, "after an investment of six weeks without any attempt to raise the siege, the consequence of which will be the loss of all our other works and shipping on the river, and will give easy winter quarters to Mr. Howe and his army, whilst we shall be reduced to the hard necessity of making a winter campaign in the open field, with naked troops, or give up the greater part of this once happy state to be subjected and laid under contribution. I have thus given you a true picture of our present situation, over which I wish to draw a veil until our arms procure one more lovely, which I don't yet despair of, if our worthy General will but follow his own good judgment without listening too much to some counsel."*

But besides these expressions of honest and friendly regret, there was secret and most malignant censure on every act and omission, real or apparent, of Washington. A cabal consisting of a few members of Congress, of discontented and disappointed officers of the army, and of others still more worthless and better suited to the purposes of secret slander, had been formed, whose end and aim seemed to be the defamation of the Commander-in-chief. Every unavoidable disaster was the subject of ill-natured comment. The most unworthy and transient popular resentments were stimulated and directed against him, and it was with the greatest difficulty that this secret hostility was prevented from an outbreak before which even Washington, with all his power and dignified self-reliance, might have sunk. The machinations of this conspiracy were in full play after

* MS. Letter Nov. 1777. See also Marshall's Washington, vol. i. ch. 9.

Gates's victory at Saratoga, and during Washington's apparently helpless inaction in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia.*

It has been seen that General Reed concurred in opinion with those of the military council who advised against the attack on Philadelphia. His mind, however, seems to have been turned to other schemes of annoyance to the enemy, and the following very remarkable letter, written during a temporary absence from Camp, to General Washington, no doubt embodied his opinions and wishes at the time. The plan which it indicates not only illustrates the comprehensive views of the writer, but his entire freedom from the narrow local feeling which was too often manifested, to the great perplexity and annoyance of the Commander-in-chief. It seemed impossible to reconcile the authorities, and many of the officers of Pennsylvania to any plan of operations, even the going into winter quarters at a short distance, which involved the abandonment of any portion of the State.

* Mr. Sparks, in his collection of the Washington Letters, has collected many materials relating to this affair (vol. v. p. 483). There are others yet unpublished, and among them a letter from James Lovell of Massachusetts to Gates dated Yorktown, 27th November, 1777, of a most remarkable character, as showing the extent to which this hostility was carried. It will be found in the MS. collections of the New York Historical Society. In the same collection is a paper, apparently in Mr. Lovell's writing, and by him sent to Gates, called Anecdote. It is of course only cited as a specimen of ill-natured camp and Congress gossip.

"ANECDOTE.—Doctor Craig (Craik), the Clitus of this army, spoke very freely to a great man on the subject of favouritism and impenetrable reserve, and gave a free opinion on the probable consequences. It was taken kindly, and given out that a change would happen in conduct. Thus it took place. The two privy councillors, (supposed to be Greene and Knox), absented themselves three or four days from table. Reed and Cadwalader were caressed, and appeared as substitutes. But the great man's feelings were too much hurt by the apparent banishment of his dear, dear They were restored, and, wonderful to tell, he has now two sets of favourites, friends, the one ostensible only, to blind the army, and the other real, and at the bottom of every movement. Again, Reed and Cadwalader, though good men, have no commissions in the army, yet their advice is taken on all occasions, and good authority says they sit in all councils of war. Do you recollect a similar adventure?"

MR. REED TO WASHINGTON.

Norriton, December 1st, 1777.

I can easily conceive that the prospect of closing the campaign without some action, and leaving the enemy in peaceable possession of Philadelphia, gives you some concern, but it must be some alleviation to reflect that those officers, who, from their station, are entitled to suggest plans, have proposed no vigorous measures which you overruled, and that there was almost a unanimity of opinion against those proposed by others. It is much to be wished that gentlemen in general command, would, instead of being called upon to give an opinion on a proposition made by you, turn their thoughts upon schemes and plans of attack, and offer them to your consideration; their leisure, of which they have much more in camp than the Commander-in-chief, would be usefully employed, and I dare say some hint would often occur, that might be improved into a useful plan. As you receive every thing of this nature very kindly, I am encouraged to commit some thoughts to paper on our present situation; if they contain anything capable of improvement, I shall think my time well spent; if not, they will only take so much of yours as to read them, and you can afterwards destroy them. We are now very differently situated than at any time during the war, and I think the difference is in the enemy's favour. They are strong and well posted, possessed of sufficient covering for their troops, and now their ships are got up, they will feel no real distress for provisions. Fresh meat, butter, &c., are rather luxuries to soldiers than necessities. We know they subsisted in Boston, and in tolerable health, without them. Your army can have no cover but at so small a distance as to have it in danger of being beat out of their winter quarters, (one of the greatest misfortunes it could suffer) the country round very much exhausted, and wood very scarce. If it retires to a very great distance, it must divide into towns remote from the enemy and from each other, leaving the intermediate country open to an intercourse with the enemy, and exposing a great number of good whigs to absolute ruin. But this is not the worst; in that case every species of seduction and intimidation would be practised, and there would be great danger of their raising a considerable party. The Delaware too will now be very inconvenient. If they establish a post on the Jersey shore, we shall be obliged to keep some troops there, or they will in some degree command that part of the country. To form a complete circle round the city would require a great body of troops, and they would be divided by intervening rivers, so as at some times to make mutual support impracticable. I state all these things upon a supposition that all idea of a present attack upon the town is laid aside, as I fear it must be, as too hazardous. In these circumstances, I think I am justified in saying the enemy have greatly the advantage in point of situation.

What therefore is to be done? it is an important question, and ought to be viewed in every point of light. A winter's campaign, to armies possessed of resources for clothing, has always proved very destructive; to ours I fear it would be absolute ruin. Prince Ferdinand, in 1759, though victorious, almost destroyed the allied army by keeping the field till towards spring. I am therefore, I confess, very much against it; discontent, desertion, and distress I fear would be the consequence of attempting it with the best huts or covering that could be procured in the field at this advanced season of the year. Some persons, both in and out of the army, have talked of an attack upon the city, when the Schuylkill is froze; a successful one would be a very desirable event; I have thought much of it, and my wishes have almost got the better of my judgment, but when I have considered the complication of circumstances, in order to attempt it, and the chances of success, I cannot help determining against it. In this scheme it is proposed to collect a great body of militia: Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia are to supply them; as to the first, they have been, and will be so much employed at home, that I think we cannot place much dependence on them; as to this state, they can with difficulty find arms for one-fourth now; where would they arm a greater number? As to the two last, you can form a better judgment, but from what we have seen I think we cannot be sanguine. The same difficulty, if they should come in numbers, as to arms still presents itself; but if they should come, and well armed, I do not think we can rely much on such troops, for so hazardous an attack. In the next place, to execute this plan you must keep the Continental troops in the field, as it would be impossible to collect them for the purpose, the danger of which I have taken notice of before. It must also be taken into the account too, from the nature of the business, that it can be no secret, that the weather is extremely uncertain, a frost to-day may be a thaw to-morrow, supposing every thing prepared to our wishes; on the opposite bank, we are to encounter a well-appointed army of at least twelve thousand men, for I cannot, since the late reinforcements, set General Howe down at less; on one side well secured with redoubts, and perhaps, by that time, new works thrown up on the other; add to this, that the ships will furnish a body of sailors and marines, who may here, as at Quebec, make a respectable force. I very much doubt whether your Excellency will be able to oppose an equal number of Continental troops, and as I before observed, I do not think our militia could be depended upon on such an occasion. The drawing them together in the middle of the winter, and their subsistence, if numerous, I lay no stress upon, if the scheme was otherwise practicable.

Upon the whole, I am of opinion the issue is too precarious to induce you to keep the field and adapt all your movements to it, which must be the case if it is pursued. But the discontented cry out, something should be done, and even the judicious and prudent view with concern the approach of another campaign. Without some event to raise the spirits of the army

and country, and prop the sinking credit of our money, I agree that something should be done, but too much ought not to be risked.

Amidst the many projects with which my imagination has teemed, one presents itself which I candidly own I have hinted to some gentlemen for their opinion, but they do not approve it; however, I am still fond of it, and am much confirmed in it from a long conversation I had a few days ago with a person of intelligence from New York. That city is the enemy's principal magazine of military stores; it is full of all those goods of which our army is in so much necessity; the whole strength there, Kingsbridge, Long Island, and Staten Island, does not, from this person's account, exceed three thousand men, and they the very poorest of their troops. The present set of inhabitants are avowed enemies, and that the only part of America where the militia, though contemptible, have formed under the old government. The advantages accruing from a successful stroke, setting the destruction of the army out of the question, would be greater there, than at Philadelphia. The supply of your own army, the obliging the men-of-war left there, which are but few, to seek a new harbour in the depth of winter; but above all, the effect it would have on our own people and in Europe, clearly demonstrating to the nations and foreign powers that the enemy cannot retain their conquests, would, in my judgment, produce the most decisive consequences. It will be said, perhaps, that upon such a movement the stores and effects would be removed; this person assures me that they are so many, six times the number of vessels they have could not do it; that when the late reinforcements came away, there was some apprehension of a visit from Putnam, and it was found there would not be vessels enough to take the king's stores. That General Jones protested against stripping the city so bare of troops; and Clinton, who was to have come, remained behind to pacify the people, and compose matters.

It may perhaps be objected, that upon a suspicion of this movement, Howe would throw over a body of troops across Jersey, and reinforce; this objection I will answer in the plan I would propose for conducting this business, which would be something like this. In the first place, the design must be kept a profound secret; keep the troops in the field until the season sets in, so as the ships are laid up for the winter quarters; then, after leaving such a force as would be sufficient to give a head to the militia, and cover the country from small parties, (trusting to the season, for defence against large bodies,) let the troops destined for the service file off, under a pretence of seeking winter quarters, those belonging to New England to find them in their own country, and others in Jersey; lull the suspicion of the enemy by remaining yourself behind for some time, and the troops moving in small bodies. The few troops on the east side of Hudson River, in the mean time making necessary preparations, if possible, without alarm. When the troops were collected, I could wish on many accounts yourself to be at their head, and then fall down as rapidly as possible. I doubt not you would have as many of the militia of New York and New England,

who are now well armed, as you could wish to co-operate with you; yourself and almost every officer of rank in your army perfectly acquainted with the ground; I cannot help thinking it would be crowned with success. In answer to the objection I started above, from a perfect knowledge of the country through which a reinforcement must march, I am clearly of opinion the roads could be so destroyed and obstructed, by taking up bridges, felling trees, &c., that with thirty horse and one hundred foot, I would undertake to make it a three weeks' journey, if not totally impracticable; added to this, a regiment or two of Continental troops, for the militia together, might be left in Jersey, to hang upon the rear, and delay them till you had completed the business. I do not know a more effectual mode of stopping an enemy's progress than carrying the war into his own country; it has been practised with success by the greatest captains, from Scipio to Charles XII. of Sweden, and that at a time when their own country seemed to call loudly for their aid; and it is the more successful as the defendants turn assailants, and you disconcert all the schemes of your enemies, which are grounded on a supposition that you will remain on the defensive. In this plan, I would have the troops cross over as near Kingsbridge, or rather as much below Peek's Kill, as they could, without giving alarm, which they would not do if they went in small parties. Supposing the enemy's ships to get out, and carry with them a considerable part of the stores, would it not be a great thing to drive them out at that season, with a chance of being blown off to the West Indies, and no friendly harbour to receive them on this side Halifax? for the Delaware will not be practicable; but it often happens that the harbour of New York is frost-bound; in that case the prize would be very great. If any person will set down and sincerely weigh the consequence resulting from this success, I am persuaded he will think it is an object worth hazarding something to obtain, and it is the more feasible as the enemy certainly have no apprehension of danger in that quarter. Do not, my dear sir, be discouraged at the distance or length of march; your troops will think nothing of it, when they see the prize before them; and the calling the New England brigades down will, in case of success, be deemed a stroke of generalship to deceive the enemy, and weaken the post you meant to attack. Heavy cannon I understand you will find in General Putnam's camp, so that you need not encumber yourself with them; many indeed will not be wanted. If you should think the project sufficiently rational to take the opinion of others upon it, I would just hint that I think you would obtain a more satisfactory judgment of it by concealing my name, and proposing it as a scheme that had been submitted to your consideration, without saying by whom. Without meaning the least disrespect to your Excellency's Council, I would further add that too many opinions will mar any plan. We have among the lawyers a Latin phrase, the English of which is, that opinions should be weighed, not numbered.*

* This plan of attack on New York seems to have been well received by Washington. He refers to it in his correspondence, (v. 302,) and in April,

I did intend to have troubled you with a few observations on the winter quarters of your army, supposing this or any other project of the like nature not practicable: but I fear I shall trespass too much at one time, so that I will defer it to another day. In the mean time I hope you will accept this as a small proof of sincere regard.

Scarcely had this letter been written, when the following was received from General Washington.

TO GENERAL REED.

Whitemarsh, December 2, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

If you can with any convenience let me see you to-day, I shall be thankful for it. I am about fixing the winter cantonments of this army, and find so many and such capital objections to each mode proposed, that I am exceedingly embarrassed, not only by the advice given me, but in my own judgment, and should be very glad of your sentiments on the subject, without loss of time. In hopes of seeing you, I shall only add that from Reading to Lancaster inclusively, is the general sentiment, whilst Wilmington and its vicinity has powerful advocates.* This, however, is mentioned under the

1778, submitted it to a council of war. Its advocates then were Generals Greene, Knox, Poor, Varnum, Muhlenberg, and Lord Stirling. It was however relinquished. (*Id.* 320.)

* Of this last opinion was Cadwalader, who, on the day but one before, thus earnestly and confidentially wrote to Reed:

Head-Quarters, November 30, 1777.

"Dear Sir,—We were consulting about winter quarters when your letter came to hand. I detained your servant, in hopes of giving you their determination, but the General has required the opinions of his officers in writing at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning. I showed your letter to the General. Many of the officers are for going into winter quarters on the line from Lancaster towards Easton. If this is attempted, I am sure the army will march there only to be disappointed. By the best information, those towns are crowded with inhabitants from the city, and little shelter can be found there. The general officers will set the example of going home. The field officers will follow their example. Captains and subalterns will expect the same indulgence, and the soldiers will apply for furloughs, and if refused will desert. By these means, the army will be dispersed through the different colonies, and it will be impossible to collect them in time to open an early campaign. The country on every side will be left to be plundered, and vast numbers will apply for protection. The inhabitants will be dispirited, the credit of our money ruined, the recruiting service at an end, and inevitable ruin must follow.

rose; for I am convinced in my own opinion, that if the enemy believed we had this place in contemplation, they would possess themselves of it immediately. I am, very sincerely, dear sir,

Your affectionate

G. WASHINGTON.

Mr. Reed lost no time in repairing to Camp, and arrived in season not only to influence the decision as to the winter quarters, but to take part in the last action of the campaign. No sooner was the British General relieved from

It has been proposed to take post at Wilmington and the little towns in that neighbourhood, and build huts for those who cannot be provided with quarters. If we do not do this, the enemy may take possession of that post with 2000 men or three, which they can easily spare, and by this means secure the lower counties on the Eastern Shore. By taking possession of this strong post, and bringing down the gondolas, we may annoy the navigation, and by being on the spot in the spring, take such measures as may oblige the enemy to come out and attack us in the field. We have good information that Cornwallis has returned, and that the enemy had orders to march at 2 o'clock yesterday morning. The orders were not given out till dusk. The officers were driving about in great confusion, and were heard to complain that the orders came out so late. The weather prevented, or we should certainly have had a brush yesterday. Greene and the detachment from New Jersey are all arrived in camp. We are now in full force, and in perfect readiness for them, and wish nothing more earnestly than to see them out. The weather will probably delay the matter for a few days, but I have no doubt they intend us a visit, or else this is given out to cover a design of making a large foraging party to New Jersey, as a great number of boats have been collected. The last seems very probable. The Marquis, you know, was in Jersey; he commanded the detachment of riflemen, about 150, and 130 militia, with which he attacked a Hessian picket of 350 men, and drove them above a mile, and at dusk remained master of the field—finding a number of dead, and taking fourteen prisoners. 'Tis said they lost twenty killed: we lost but three or four men. The Marquis behaved with great bravery, and extols the riflemen and militia to the skies. The enemy crossed at Gloucester, covered by their shipping, and took with them about four hundred head of cattle, chiefly milch cows and young cattle. Greene intended to attack Cornwallis, and had made his disposition, but prudently declined it. The attempt, in my opinion, was dangerous, as 2 or 3000 men could have been thrown in his rear, or a reinforcement sent over to Gloucester in the night without notice. Nothing more worth notice.

Cannot you come here to-morrow? You can think of the matter to-night. My compliments to the ladies.

Your most obedient and

Very humble servant,

JOHN CADWALADER.

To General Reed.

the apprehension which the presence of the Americans at the Forts on the Delaware occasioned, than he determined to make an effort to bring Washington to a general action. The following letters, written on the spot, and at the time, describe the scenes very graphically.

MR. REED TO WHARTON.

Norriton, December 10th.

Your favour of the 3d was delivered to me at Head-quarters, on Sunday last, from whence I came here last evening.

The enemy came out of Philadelphia in full force, lay at Chestnut Hill that night; the next morning our army was under arms, and everything prepared for battle; General Irwin, with six hundred men having been ordered, on the first approach of the enemy, to get to Chestnut Hill if possible, fell in with them at the bottom of it. A sharp skirmish ensued, but his people soon gave way, leaving him wounded on the field with about four or five more. The enemy lost about twelve in killed and wounded. Among the latter a Sir James Murray. General Irwin has lost three fingers and has a bad contusion on the head, but is like to do well.* He is now in Philadelphia. We expected their approach hourly, but on Saturday night they moved with their right wing as far North as Abingdon Presbyterian Meeting, forming a half-circle around our army. As soon as their movement was ascertained, Morgan's riflemen, with the Maryland militia, were ordered to meet and harass their advance on the right. Colonel Webb's Continental regiment, with General Potter's brigade to support it, were ordered on the like service on the left. Morgan met them at Edge Hill, near where the road crosses to the Presbyterian Meeting. He gave them a severe opposition. The Militia also are highly spoken of as supporting him with great spirit. After a sharp conflict they gradually gave way to a great superiority of numbers; having killed and wounded a number of the enemy, and also sustaining a loss of near twenty killed and wounded themselves. On the other wing, General Cadwalader and myself, at the General's request, were observing the advance of the enemy and their intended plan of attack. We first saw them at Ottinger's, near your house,†

* This was James, not William Irvine, of Pennsylvania. In the military histories of the Revolution, they are often confounded.—See *Index to Sparks's Washington*, xii. 531.

† Mr. Wharton's country seat, called Twickenham, in Cheltenham Township, Montgomery County.

but in a moment they moved, crossing your meadows in considerable numbers, but scattered. General Potter, Cadwalader, and myself endeavoured to draw up the troops in the woods, back of your house, in order to flank that wing.* We were not so happy as to succeed as we wished; the troops

* In this skirmish, General Reed had a narrow escape. Armstrong, in a letter of the 7th December, to Mr. Wharton, says, "Yesterday, General Reed, leading on some of our militia, with whom he fell in when reconnoitering, had his horse shot through the head, lost one of his pistols, saddle and bridle, which he was obliged to leave with his dead horse, himself having a narrow escape." In the MS. Journal of Allen M'Lane, the same incident is thus described: "General Reed was on a visit to Head-quarters, at Whitemarsh, when General Howe moved out of Philadelphia, on the 5th December, 1777, at the head of 15,000 men, to attack General Washington in his camp. The writer of this saw General Reed's horse fall, on the morning of the 6th, and charged the enemy's flankers, who were running to bayonet Reed who was recovering from his fall. Reed was carried off the field by a light horseman, and the enemy's flanking party driven to the left of the British army. The right was then engaged near Edge Hill, with Morgan's riflemen on the left of Washington's army; Morgan worsted the enemy, and the firing ceased. General Howe returned to Philadelphia on the night of the 7th, after burning and laying waste all the farms, from the Rising Sun Tavern on the Germantown Road to the city, to the great disgrace and mortification of the British army, which was harassed by about one hundred and fifty of Washington's cavalry, until they passed the Globe Inn, on Front Street."

Elias Boudinot, writing to President Wharton from Camp on the 9th of December, gives a more detailed account of these skirmishes.

"Being much fatigued, I can only give you the outlines of the transactions of the last four days. On Friday morning about three o'clock, the alarm-gun announced the approach of the enemy, and about eight they appeared in sight on Chestnut Hill. On reconnoitering, their line was found to extend along the ridge of hills parallel to ours. They continued altering their position, and moving to our left, with many different manœuvres on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. Several smart skirmishes happened during this time with the light parties, in which some few men were lost, and prisoners taken on both sides, but I am sorry to inform you that your worthy General Irwin was wounded, left by his men, and taken by the enemy. The Maryland militia behaved well, but the Pennsylvania militia greatly disgraced their country, running away at the first fire from half their number, and they green coats, and while we were in their flanks too. Colonel Reed had liked to have fallen a sacrifice to their cowardice, his horse having been shot under him, and he escaped with great difficulty.

"On Monday evening they made a small movement to the left, and halted, making a long string of fires on the heights. These they lighted up briskly, and under cover of the night, retreated with precipitancy and silence into the city, while they could be come up with only by the light-horse. As all their movements, added to their repeated declarations of driving General Washington over the Blue Mountains, were calculated to assure us of their having come out with

giving way too soon, the enemy pressing on gave them a fire which completed their disorder. However, their numbers being considerable, I rallied a considerable body near your next neighbour's, a Captain of militia. Upon their complaining of their officers, and requesting me to lead them, we advanced upon the enemy again, with a favourable opportunity of flanking their flanking party, but the first impression could not be worn off. We got no honour. The enemy continued to advance and posted their pickets about half a mile from our army, their main body lying back of your house. In this manner we lay watching their motions and they ours, when, on Monday, to our great surprise, they moved off by the Old York Road, and got into town about midnight, burning a house or two on their way. Yours is not among the number. I believe the damage done to you is very inconsiderable. The spirit of ravage and plunder was never more conspicuous, without the least discrimination. Their avowed intention in coming out was to attack the army. This induced the General to make a disposition adapted to their design, and it was with great concern we found they relinquished it, as I have not the least doubt but with the smiles of heaven we should have gained a complete victory. His Excellency expressed the strongest inclination to attack them, as soon as it was known they would not attack us, but his principal officers were utterly opposed to it, as the enemy lay too little in one place to give a knowledge of their situation, or make a disposition for such an attempt. I think more enterprise in our army would be acceptable, but I must say, in justice to the Commander-in-chief, that there has been such an unanimity of opinion against every offensive movement proposed, as would have discouraged an older and more experienced officer than this war could yet produce.

A line of winter quarters has been proposed and supported by some of his principal officers, subject to the inconveniences you so well describe, but I believe I may assure you he will not come into it, but take post as near the enemy, and cover as much of the country as the nakedness and wretched condition of some part of the army will admit. To keep the field entirely

the determination to fight, it was thought prudent to keep our post upon the hills, near the Church. Had they attacked us here, I believe, in all human probability, it would have been the last they would have made in America. I understand it was resolved, that if they did not begin the attack soon, to have fought them at all events, it not being supposed that they could, consistent with their own feelings on this occasion, have secretly stole into the city so suddenly, after so long gasconading on what they intended to do.

"I am rather led to believe that we shall not see winter quarters this year, and although it is a severe alternative, yet for my own part, I am fully convinced the good of our country calls for even this sacrifice from us."

A portion of one of the American redoubts is yet (1846) visible on the heights to the North of the Whitemarsh Church.

is impracticable, and so you would think, if you saw the plight we were in. From your neighbourhood we must remove or starve. You will soon know the plan, and as it has been adopted principally upon the opinions of the gentlemen of this state, I hope it will give satisfaction to you and the gentlemen around you. If it is not doing what we would, it is doing what we can, and I must say the General has shown a truly feeling and patriotic respect for us on this occasion, in which you would agree with me if you knew all the circumstances. I am much obliged to you for the papers accompanying your letter, and in return send you a late Philadelphia paper, but it contains nothing interesting. There has been a firing in the river yesterday and this morning, but we cannot learn the occasion. As I look upon the campaign to be closed, I was preparing to go to York, but Mr. Biard informing me that a new appointment was to take place, I wait for advice upon the subject by which to regulate my motion.* I have declined going to the frontiers. It was not in my power to comply with the wishes of Congress for many reasons.†

* On the 14th September, 1777, the Pennsylvania Assembly elected as delegates in Congress, Joseph Reed, in the place of Jonathan B. Smith, resigned, and William Clingan, and Dr. Samuel Duffield, in the place of Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Clymer, superseded. At the time the letter in the text was written, Mr. Reed had not taken his seat under this appointment. On the 10th December, the date of his letter, the Assembly made a new election, choosing for the ensuing year, Franklin, Reed, Morris, Roberdeau, J. B. Smith, James Smith, and Clingan.

† This is explained by the following letter from the President of Congress.

Yorktown, 23d November, 1777.

SIR,

Under cover with this, I have the honour of forwarding to you an act of Congress of the 25th inst., by which you are appointed a Commissioner for Indian affairs, on the western frontiers of this state, and the paper will inform you particularly the object which Congress have in view. It is ardently wished that the appointment may meet your acceptance, of which you will be pleased to give me notice with convenient despatch.

I am, with great respect and esteem, &c.,

HENRY LAURENS,

President of Congress.

To General Reed.

The object of this commission was to concert measures with General Hand, then at Fort Pitt, for the pacification of the disaffected Indians, and the reduction of the British post at Detroit. The commissioners originally appointed beside Mr. Reed, were Samuel Washington and Gabriel Jones. On Mr. Reed's declining the appointment, George Clymer was elected.—*Journals*, 11th December, 1777.

The closing scene of the campaign is thus described in a letter to Mr. Wharton.

Norriton, December 13, 1777.

The night of the 10th, the army marched from their camp at White-marsh, with a view to pass the Schnykill and proceed to their quarters somewhere on the west side of that river, but to their great surprise, just as two divisions of the army had reached the other side, the enemy appeared on the opposite hill. General Sullivan, who led the front, immediately returned, crossed the river, and broke a part of the bridge after him. Advice was obtained in the afternoon that it was a foraging party, commanded by Lord Cornwallis, consisting of a force between two and four thousand men. Some of the general officers, thinking this a favourable opportunity to attack the enemy thus detached and fallen back from the hills so as to favour our crossing, were for passing the River immediately for that purpose; but, very unhappily in my judgment, a contrary opinion prevailed, and the army retired about two miles or less from the river, where they lay till last evening and then crossed,—the enemy from the best advices being then on their way to Philadelphia, and very near it. They have made a grand forage, burnt many houses and plundered the inhabitants. It was somewhat mortifying that this should be done in the face of our whole army; but the danger of crossing while the enemy was in the neighbourhood, occasioned some gentlemen pressing earnestly to avoid an offensive measure. I believe they will very soon see things in a different point of view, for in love and war, opportunities are everything. The General has suffered his own better judgment to be controlled by others, as that would have led to an attack, which I am well satisfied would have proved great and glorious to America, as well as signally serviceable to this State. I forgot mentioning that General Potter, being on the west side of the Schuylkill when the enemy came out, they fell upon and routed him. His people, particularly three regiments, behaved exceedingly well, but were obliged to give way to superior numbers. I believe they have not suffered much. The most of them are come in, and have crossed again with the General and army. In my last, I have mentioned that the plan of cantoning the army for the winter, was approved by the gentlemen of this state, and I hoped, would be acceptable to you, and the other gentlemen in authority. Though it was not what we could wish, it was the best we could do in the present state of the army.

I am sorry to inform you that a plan of this kind, by which a brigade of Continental troops was to be left with the militia on this side Schuylkill, and which, when I wrote, I thought was approved by his Excellency, has upon other advice been totally changed. General Greene, Cadwalader and myself had fixed upon this plan as the most eligible to quiet the minds of the

people, and cover the country. Instead of this, the remains of Potter's brigade are taken over the river, though I earnestly requested they might be left as a protection from small parties. The Jerseys, who have all their own militia, will not be satisfied without a cover of Continental troops, and I trust my zeal in the cause will vindicate me from all suspicion of whimsical caprice and dissatisfaction when I say that the situation of the country from Delaware to Schuylkill is very distressing, and calls loudly for attention and help from some quarter. I fear the chief Whig inhabitants must fly, as there is no other cover than General Armstrong with about one thousand militia, many without arms and without a single troop of horse.* This weak condition has obliged him to retire twenty-five or thirty miles back from town, so that after this day there will be a free communication. The consequences of which are not for me to dwell upon.

If the State will raise a few troops for the winter for the salutary purpose of covering the country, I should think it a happy measure; and though I have given over thoughts of proceeding farther in the military line, I could for so desirable an end accept of any post or office wherever I could be useful. I shudder at the distress of the inhabitants, who must either submit or suffer much hardship. I am of opinion that a bounty for this purpose could be well applied. I have only given the hint. Wiser heads may improve or respect it. Dr. Witherspoon is waiting, &c.

On the 17th the army took up its winter quarters at the Valley Forge, and the military operations of the season closed.

* The necessary severity of military rule is well shown in the following proclamation.

By his Excellency George Washington, Esq., General and Commander-in-chief of the forces of the United States of America.

A PROCLAMATION.

By virtue of the power and direction to me especially given, I hereby enjoin and require all persons residing within seventy miles of my Head-Quarters to thresh out half of their grain by the first day of February, and the other half by the first day of March next ensuing, on pain in case of failure of having all that shall remain in sheaves after the periods above mentioned seized by the commissaries and quartermaster of the army, and paid for as straw.

Given under my hand at Head-Quarters near the Valley Forge in Philadelphia County the 20th day of December, 1777.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

By his Excellency's command.

ROBERT H. HARRISON, Secretary.

CHAPTER XVII.

1778.

Camp at Valley Forge—Committee of Congress visits Head-Quarters—Reed's letter to President Wharton—Sufferings of the army—Intercourse with the City—Letter from Committee to Congress—State of the army—Quartermaster-General's Office—Reports of the Committee—General Greene, Quartermaster-General—John Cox and Charles Pettit—Mr. Duer's Letter—Removal of Mr. Reed's family—Return to Camp—News of the French alliance—Arrival of British Commissioners—Evacuation of Philadelphia—Pursuit of the Enemy—Letter from Moylan—Battle of Monmouth—Letter from General Lee.

THE sufferings of the Americans during their winter cantonment at the Valley Forge have been often described. They have never been exaggerated. But to judge of the disorganization which this suffering produced, and the perplexities of the Commander-in-chief and his general officers, occasioned by innumerable and unavoidable breaches of discipline, it is requisite to examine the orderly books which, as the record of the daily occurrences of the camp, tell, most naturally, the tale of annoyances and distress. Washington's equanimity and self-control seems to have been tried to the utmost. On the 23d of December, he wrote to Congress a long and eloquent letter of remonstrance, urging that body especially to provide some security to both officers and men of regular payment during service, and provision on retirement. His description of the suffering of the soldiers, nearly three thousand of whom were then unfit for duty because without clothes or shoes, many obliged, for want of blankets, to sleep sitting around their miserable fires, and destitute of ordinary supplies, is eloquent in its pathetic simplicity.* It is only when referring to the perplexing conduct pursued by the local authorities that he seems

* *Sparks's Washington*, vol. v. 197.

to lose his temper, and then indulges in asperity which no one can wonder at or censure.

In the same letter, after dwelling at length on the defective organization of the Army, he urged upon Congress the expediency of sending two or three members of the newly-constituted Board of War and a Committee of their own body to Camp, to concert with him some effective arrangement for the next campaign. He begged them to act at once. No final action was, however, had, till the 10th and 12th of January, when a committee, consisting of Dana, Reed, Folsom, and Harvie, were appointed, with full power, in conjunction with Gates, Mifflin, and Pickering, of the Board of War, to repair to Camp, and confer with Washington. The members of the Board of War were subsequently excused, and Charles Carroll and Gouverneur Morris added to the Committee. At this time, Mr. Reed had not taken his seat in Congress, having been, as the correspondence shows, actively engaged at Camp, where he probably was or at his residence at Norriton, a few miles distant, when the intelligence of his appointment on the Committee reached him. He at once entered on his new duties.*

* The very full powers of this Committee are shown in the Resolution of 10th January, 1778, viz.: "Resolved, that three members of Congress, together with three members of the Board of War, be appointed a Committee to repair to General Washington's Head-Quarters, as soon as may be, and in concert with him, to form and execute a plan for reducing the number of battalions in the Continental service, reporting to Congress the names and rank of such officers of merit now in the service, as cannot be annexed to the battalions retained on the establishment, taking particular care in the appointment of officers to these battalions not to annex officers belonging to one State to the battalions raised by another State. To recommend to Congress the necessary appointment of general officers; to remove officers in the civil departments of the army for misconduct, negligence, or incompetency, and to appoint others in their room, till the pleasure of Congress can be known; to remove all just cause of complaint relative to rank, confining it as nearly as possible to the military line; to report upon the expediency of appointing brigade instead of regimental chaplains, and also to remove from office, any chaplain for ignorance or negligence in the duties of his office, or for immoral conduct; to determine and report as soon as may be to Congress their opinion of the necessary reinforcements for the cavalry, artillery, and infantry, and the best mode of obtaining them; to report such alterations as they shall deem expedient in the regulations of the several departments, and in general to adopt such other measures as they shall judge necessary, for introducing economy and promoting discipline and good morals in the army."

MR. REED TO PRESIDENT WHARTON.

Camp at Valley Forge, February 1st, 1778.

The expectation of seeing you at Lancaster, has prevented my continuing our autumn correspondence. I am now attending the Committee of Congress for the reform and re-establishment of the army, an Herculean work, I do assure you, in which difficulties daily occur, though I hope not insurmountable. It would be much beyond the limits of a letter to enumerate them, and indeed in matters of a general concern, it would be fruitless; for a general evil can only be cured by a general remedy. But there are some events so immediately interesting to this State, and within the reach of its assistance, that I think it my duty to mention them. The intercourse between the country and the town, has produced all the consequences foreseen by many in the beginning of the winter. The supply of provisions to recruit and refresh our enemies, I count the least pernicious. The minds of the inhabitants are seduced, their principles tainted, and opposition enfeebled; a familiarity with the enemy lessens their abhorrence of them and their measures; even good Whigs begin to think peace, at some expense, desirable.* The currency for twenty miles round the town stagnates; the hope of getting to market with their produce induces them to keep it back, and deny they have it. The hope of checking it by Continental troops, I give over, they are so few in number, so much in need of refreshment, and those upon duty have in many instances proved so corruptible, that we should delude ourselves if we depended on their exertions. There needs no stronger proof of this than that the intercourse on this side of the Schuylkill, though upon account of the river more easy of interruption, is the greatest. I see plainly, that unless it is committed wholly to the Militia, nothing effectual can be done. I doubt not there will be many abuses, but in my judgment, no partial evil arising from them is to be compared to the extensive mischief of the present mode. I think it would receive a check, if, by proclamation, it

* Gouverneur Morris on the same day wrote from Camp to Mr. Jay: "The free, open, and undisguised communication with Philadelphia debauches the minds of those in its vicinage, with astonishing rapidity. This State is sick even unto death—our troops, *heu miseri*, the skeleton of an army, presents itself to our eyes in a naked, starving condition, out of health, out of spirits. But I have seen Fort George in the summer of '77 (*Sparks' Life of Morris*, i. p. 154)." On the 22d of January, Washington wrote to Colonel Walter Stewart: "If any particular mode of cutting off this pernicious intercourse strikes you, be pleased to communicate it to General Lacey. The property taken, with the horses and carriages that transport it should be seized, without distinction, and if any one of the persons are proper objects to make examples of, it must be done. They have had sufficient warnings and cannot, therefore, plead ignorance in excuse of their crime."—*Sparks' Washington*, v. 223.

was notified to the inhabitants that under some severe penalty they should not go into the City, without leave obtained from the lieutenants of the county or his deputies; this indulgence to be granted to no men, on any pretext, who had not taken the oath of the State, and when women make application they must act according to their discretion.

Another check in this case would be that all papers or permits should be printed with blanks for the names, and to be delivered up to the guard when they have passed. Infantry alone I fear would not be equal to the duty, but this might soon be remedied, as I am sure there are a number of young fellows of reputation that would soon form a corps to act in conjunction with the foot. The enemy have formed a corps of country light horse under one Jacob James, which has already been very mischievous, and will be more so. No person conspicuous in civil and military life not with the army, or at a great distance, will be safe if some body of the same kind is not soon raised for the protection of its citizens.* Horse and foot should act together to be efficacious, and you may depend upon it the Continental horse and militia foot will not harmonize. That you will come into this after some time I have no doubt, but if you delay it, I have no doubt in the course of this spring you will lose some of your best citizens. This has been the case in Jersey, where some of the members of their Legislature are now languishing in the jails of New York. Fifty men, with a proportion of good officers, will be quite sufficient. I have not been able to think of any new regula-

* Mrs. Reed, on 28th February, writes from Norriton to one of her female friends: "It has already become too dangerous for my husband to be at home more than one day at a time, and that seldom and uncertain. Indeed, I am easiest when he is from home, as his being here brings danger with it. There are so many disaffected to the cause of their country that they lay in wait for those that are active in it." (*MS.*) On the day before (27th) Congress passed the following resolution (*Journals*, 1778, p. 121). "Whereas, a few deluded inhabitants of these states, prompted thereto by arts of the enemy, have associated together for the purpose of seizing and secretly conveying to places in possession of the British forces, such of the loyal citizens, officers and soldiers of these States as may fall into their power, and being assisted by parties furnished by the enemy, have, in several instances, carried their nefarious designs into execution; and such practices being contrary to their allegiance as subjects, and repugnant to the rules of war;

"Resolved,—That whatever inhabitants of these states shall kill or seize, or take any loyal citizen or citizens thereof, and convey him, her or them to any place within the power of the enemy, or shall enter into any combination for such purpose, or attempt to carry the same into execution, or hath assisted or shall assist therein; or shall, by giving intelligence, acting as a guide, or in any other manner whatever, aid the enemy in the perpetration thereof, he shall suffer death by the judgment of a court-martial as a traitor, assassin and spy, if the offence be committed within seventy miles of the Head-Quarters of the grand army or other posts of these states where a general officer commands."

tions for the Militia, which are practicable in our present situation. The system in the main is a good one. Defects, in my opinion, do not proceed so much from the plan (except the choice of officers) as from the want of competent persons to execute it. While our State is the seat of war, and I fear it will be so for some time, the Militia will be called for frequently and largely. It improves, I think, every day, and I am persuaded will in time be as good as any of its neighbours. You must not judge of it altogether by the report of Continental officers. It is fashionable to blame them, and it is sometimes carried to a blameable length.

The state of our army in respect to force and numbers has kept us much employed. —— I cannot close without suggesting to your consideration the necessity of forming some plan of executing the law for supply of provisions. It appears clearly to me that however well intended, the law will have no effect if two persons are to execute it for a whole county: I have thought sometimes a revival of Committees will have a very good effect. For some purposes I am sure it will, but it may be perverted from its design. It is in vain to look for any attempt upon the City under the most favourable circumstances in other respects, if provisions are not procured. We are assured that the army have not now, nor ever have had more than four days' stock beforehand for their present numbers. You will easily judge the consequences of bringing a great body together under the present prospect.

On the 12th of the same month, the Committee, who, like the Commander-in-chief seem to have been much harassed by the legislative delays to which they were exposed, addressed a letter to Mr. Laurens, as President of Congress, which contains a precise statement of the condition of affairs at Camp, and a most eloquent appeal to the patriotism of Congress. The history of this document is somewhat curious. A copy of it was found among Mr. Laurens's papers at his capture at sea in 1780, and was first published by Stedman in his History of the War. It was signed by Francis Dana in behalf of the Committee, but is in the handwriting of General Reed. It belongs therefore to this biography.

TO PRESIDENT LAURENS.

Camp at Valley Forge, February 12, 1778.

SIR,

We had flattered ourselves that before this time the pleasure of Congress would be made known to us respecting the Quartermaster's department. We fear our letter upon this subject has miscarried, or the consideration

of it yielded to other business. You will therefore pardon us, when we again solicit your attention to it as an object of the last importance; on which not only the future success of your arms, but the present existence of your army immediately depends. The influence of this office is so diffusive through every part of your military system, that neither the wisdom of arrangement, the spirit of enterprise, or favourable opportunity will be of any avail, if this great wheel in the machine stops or moves heavily. We find ourselves embarrassed in entering on this subject lest a bare recital of facts should carry an imputation, (which we do not intend,) on those gentlemen who have lately conducted it. We are sensible great and just allowances are to be made for the peculiarity of their situation, and we are perhaps not fully acquainted with their difficulties. It is our duty, to inform you it is not our intention to censure; and be assured, nothing but a sense of the obligation we are under to postpone all other considerations to the public safety, would induce us to perform the unpleasing task. We find the property of the Continent dispersed over the whole country; not an encampment, route of the army, or considerable road but abounds with wagons, left to the mercy of the weather, and the will of the inhabitants; large quantities of intrenching tools have in like manner been left in various hands, under no other security, that we can learn, than the honesty of those who have them in possession. Not less than three thousand spades and shovels, and a like number of tomahawks, have been lately discovered, and collected in the vicinity of the camp by an order from one of the general officers. In the same way, a quantity of tents and tent-cloth, after having laid a whole summer in a farmer's barn, and unknown to the officer of the department, was lately discovered and brought to camp by a special order from the General. From these instances we presume there may be many other stores yet unknown and uncollected, which require immediate care and attention.

When, in compliance with the expectations of Congress and the wishes of the country, the army was thrown into huts, instead of retiring to more distant and convenient quarters, the troops justly expected every comfort the surrounding country could afford. Among these, a providential care in the article of straw would probably have saved the lives of many of your brave soldiers, who have now paid the great debt of nature. Unprovided with this, or materials to raise them from the cold and wet earth, sickness and mortality have spread through their quarters in an astonishing degree. Notwithstanding the diligence of the physicians and surgeons, of whom we hear no complaint, the sick and dead list has increased one-third in the last week's return, which was one-third greater than the week preceding; and from the present inclement weather, will probably increase in a much greater proportion. Nothing can equal their sufferings, except the patience and fortitude with which the faithful part of the army endure them. Those of a different character desert in considerable numbers.

We must also observe, that a number of the troops have now for some time been prepared for inoculation; but the operation must be delayed for want of this (straw) and other necessaries within the providence of this department. We need not point out the fatal consequences of this delay in forming a new army, or the preservation of this. Almost every day furnishes instances of the small-pox in the natural way. Hitherto such vigilance and care have been used, that the contagion has not spread; but surely it is highly incumbent on us, if possible, to annihilate the danger.

We need not point out the effect this circumstance will have on the new draughted troops, if not carefully guarded; they are too obvious to need enumeration. In conference with the forage master on this subject, (which, though in appearance trivial, is really important,) he acquainted us that, though out of his line, he would have procured it if wagons could have been furnished him for that purpose.

The want of horses and wagons for the ordinary, as well as extraordinary occasions of the army, presses upon us, if possible, with equal force; almost every species of camp transportation is now performed by men; who without a murmur, patiently yoke themselves to little carriages of their own making, or load their wood and provisions on their backs. Should the enemy, encouraged by the growing weakness of your troops, be led to make a successful impression upon your camp, your artillery would now undoubtedly fall into their hands, for want of horses to remove it. But these are smaller and tolerable evils, when compared with the imminent danger of your troops perishing with famine, or dispersing in search of food. The commissaries, in addition to their supplies of live cattle, which are precarious, have found a quantity of pork in New Jersey, of which, by the failure of wagons, not one barrel has reached the camp.

The orders were given for that purpose as early as the 4th of January. In yesterday's conference with the General, he informed us that some brigades had been four days without meat, and that even the common soldiers had been at his quarters to make known their wants. At present there is not one gentleman of any rank in this department, though the duties of the office require a constant and unremitting attention. In whatever view, therefore, the object presents itself, we trust you will discern that the most essential interests are connected with it. The season of preparation for next campaign is passing swiftly away. Be assured that its operations will be ineffectual, either for offence or protection, if an arrangement is not immediately made, and the most vigorous exertions used to procure the necessary supplies. Permit us to say, that a moment's time should not be lost in placing a man of the most approved abilities and extensive capacity at the head of the department, who will restore it to some degree of regularity and order; whose provident care will immediately relieve the present wants of the army, and extend itself to those which must be satisfied before we can expect vigour, enterprise, or success. When your Committee reflect upon the increased difficulties of procuring wagons, horses, tents, and the numerous

train of articles dependent on this office, without which your army cannot even move, they feel the greatest anxiety lest the utmost skill, diligence, and address will prove ineffectual to satisfy the growing demand. All other considerations vanish before this object; and we most earnestly wish Congress may be impressed, in a proper degree, with its necessity and importance.

A report has reached us that Colonel Lutterloh is a candidate for the office of Quartermaster-General; we have therefore been led to make some inquiry into his character and conduct. We should be far from doing injustice to his abilities and experience in a subordinate line; but, exclusive of the danger of entrusting so confidential an office to a stranger whose attachment to this country must be light and transient, and whose interest may be so easily distinguished from ours, we cannot find that he possesses talents or activity equal to this important office. We find, in the course of the campaign, necessary tools and stores have often been wanting, important and seasonable movements of the army delayed—in some instances wholly frustrated, and favourable opportunities lost, through the deficiencies of this department. The rapid marches of our army, and unforeseen disasters which attended it during the summer season, partly claim some allowance; but that disorder and confusion prevail through the department, which require some able hand to reform and reduce it, is a certain and melancholy truth.

Unacquainted with the resolution of Congress with respect to General Schuyler, we have hesitated what further to propose. Time is so extremely precious that we are unwilling to lose a single necessary moment; we have therefore been induced to extend our views to the disapprobation of this gentleman, and make some provision for that event. A character has presented itself, which in a great degree meets our approbation, judgment, and wishes. We have opened the subject to him, and it is now under his consideration. When we are at liberty, we shall introduce him to your notice; but delicacy forbids our doing it until he has made up his mind on the subject, and given his consent to the nomination. Another gentleman, of extensive connexions, great activity, and comprehensive genius, but entirely in civil life, has also been proposed. As he is at a distance, we have not been able to consult him, and are restrained by similar motives of delicacy from making his name a subject of discussion without his consent.

By the time we are favoured with the determination respecting General Schuyler, and he should not be approved, we hope to be able to announce both these gentlemen for your consideration.*

* These reports are now in the Department of State at Washington. They are all interesting. The first is dated 28th January, 1778, and is in Mr. Reed's hand, writing. It recommends General Schuyler as quartermaster-general. One on the 29th, also in Mr. Reed's writing, recommending Mr. Wadsworth as Commissary-General. The others in his writing are those of the 3d February, 5th February 12th February, (in the text,) 25th February, on the organization of the Quartermas-

The individual prominently alluded to in the close of the letter was General Greene. The necessities of the army had been aggravated by the irregularities of the Quartermaster-General's department, and it became requisite that new and more business-like efficiency should be infused. Greene was, by common consent, designated as the proper person to take charge of it; the only difficulty being his reluctance to relinquish his position in the line of the army. This was, however, accommodated, and on the 2d of March, Greene, retaining his rank in the line, was chosen by Congress, and John Cox and Charles Pettit appointed his Assistants.* The effect of this new organization was soon apparent.

So valuable were Reed's services at Camp considered, not only by the Commander-in-chief, but by Congress, that he was compelled to remain there during nearly the whole campaign, and long after his colleagues of the Committee had returned to York, where Congress was in Session. He did not take his seat in Congress till the 6th April, and on the 11th, was compelled, by the threatened illness of his wife, to ask leave of absence, in order to remove her and their young and helpless family to a place of greater security than Norriton. This was readily granted, and Flemington, in New Jersey, was selected as their place of temporary refuge. Mr. Reed was not present when the votes were taken on the military establishment for officers at the expiration of the war, though, it may be presumed, from his relations to General Washington, his

ter's department, nominating General Greene and Messrs. Cox and Pettit, 5th March. (See *Johnson's Greene*, vol. i. 132, 3.)

There are two curious letters in the writing of Gouverneur Morris, but signed by the Committee, dated 2d and 20th February, urging on Congress the employment of warlike Indians to patrol the country around Philadelphia, and cut off the intercourse with the neighbourhood. They will be found in the Appendix to this volume, No. III.

* In a letter to Mr. Reed on the 9th March, 1778, General Greene says that nothing could have induced him to accept this post but the appointment of those two gentlemen as his aids. John Cox was a merchant of eminence, and an officer in the first corps raised in Philadelphia at the beginning of the Revolution. He married a sister of Mr. Reed's mother, and was closely connected with him by friendship that lasted during their lives. Colonel Cox died 28th April, 1793. Mr. Pettit died about the year 1806, having filled many distinguished public stations.

military sympathies, and the votes of his colleagues of the Pennsylvania Delegation, he would have been in its favour.*

In the beginning of June, Mr. Reed was recalled to Camp by a resolution of Congress, referring a plan of military organization to General Washington, Mr. Dana, and himself.† He immediately returned to Head-Quarters, and devoted his whole time to this important duty. In the interval the prospect had much brightened. The intelligence of the Treaty with France had been received, and there was every appearance that the evacuation of Philadelphia was at hand. What a contrast between the gloom, which, but a month before, hung over the mind of Washington, and the unwonted exhilaration that animates the letter, which, on the 25th May, he wrote to one of his friends: "Master North's last performance (the Conciliatory Bills) is nothing more nor less than an insult to common sense, and shows to what extremity of folly, wicked men, in a bad cause, are sometimes driven; for this 'rude Boreas,' who was to bring America to his feet, knew, at the time of drafting these bills, or had good reason to believe that a treaty had actually been signed between the Court of France and the United States. By what rule of common sense he could expect that such an undisguised artifice would go down in America, I cannot conceive. But thanks to

* William Duer of New York, who strongly sustained this measure, thus wrote to Robert Morris: "Perhaps, my dear friend, the joint exertions of some of us, at this time, may save our country, and revive the expiring reputation of Congress. At least, it is our duty to try it. I write in a great hurry, and in much anxiety of mind, which must plead my excuse for incorrectness. Let me know by a letter to Reading, whether you will attend Congress. If you do, I will immediately proceed to Manheim, on my return from Coryells, and go with you. Write to Colonel Joseph Reed to attend. I am sure that his and your presence, will give a right turn to the votes of Pennsylvania and Delaware, without which, the endeavours of other States will be useless."—MS. Letter, 6th March, 1778.

† *Journals of Congress*, June 4th, 1778, p. 329. Resolved, That the Resolutions of Congress, for the arrangements of the army, be transmitted to the Commander-in-chief, who, with the advice and assistance of Mr. J. Reed, and Mr. Dana, or either of them, is hereby directed and empowered to proceed in arranging the same according to the said resolutions and the resolutions of the 10th day of January last; and that for this purpose the Committee appointed, according to the resolutions last mentioned, do transmit to the Commander-in-chief, all such materials as may be in their possession, relative to such arrangements.

Heaven the tables are turned ; and we, I hope, shall have our independence secured in its fullest extent, without cringing to this ‘Son of Thunder,’ who, I am persuaded, will find abundant work for his troops elsewhere ; on which happy prospect, I sincerely congratulate you and every friend to American liberty.”*

The state of things at Camp is thus described by Mr. Reed in a letter to his wife, of the 9th June, '78.

TO MRS. REED.

Mr. Henry's, June 9th, 1778.

I got down here the day after I left you, and found a number of Philadelphians hovering around the camp, in sure and certain hope of soon entering the City, in which they have been much disappointed. There appeared on Friday every reason to believe the town would be evacuated in a few hours, but that evening the Commissioners arrived, viz.: Lord Carlisle, Governor Johnstone, and Mr. Eden, when an immediate stop was put to all further embarkation, a great deal of baggage was brought back, and some goods re-landed. In short, appearances are now as much for their stay, as they were against it last week. There has been no formal annunciation, as yet, of the arrival of the Commissioners, but it is expected hourly. Most of those that have been mischievously active against us are going with them, but many of the country refugees have come out to sue for grace, and among them, ——. Even Mr. Galloway, has made an attempt for favour, but General Clinton would not permit him to go on with it, so that he is now going off with them, if they should go, on Saturday, under the protection of a flag.

The army strengthens very fast, and both officers and men make a much more respectable appearance than they did formerly. There is the utmost appearance of harmony, and that all faction and opposition of every kind have ceased. Mrs. Washington, and the other ladies, except Mrs. Knox, have left Camp. The Commissioners say positively that there is no French war, and I am inclined to believe it ; many persons are very sanguine that the enemy must evacuate Philadelphia, after having sent their baggage off, &c., but I doubt that event is not so near as they wish, but where the operations of war will be, and how soon the campaign will open, I am much at a loss to determine. This morning, the current opinion is that they will do what they should have done last year, go up the North River, and cut off our communication with the New England States, but I cannot see how they

* *Sparks's Washington*, v. p. 391. It is curious to observe in recent disclosures that at this very moment, and for months previous, Lord North had been vainly struggling with the King's resolute purpose to enforce the obedience of the States at any cost. See Lord Holland's Memorandum.—*Sparks*, vi. 532.

can leave this army behind them with any reputation, or what success in that quarter could balance the discredit of leaving Philadelphia and giving up the Middle States. I came over from Camp on Sunday evening with the full intention of setting out, early in the morning, for Flemington, when I received a message from the General that I was appointed one of a Committee to arrange the army with him, and that the other gentlemen might be hourly expected. The next morning I received a copy of the Resolve, and as it is a business of much importance, and admitting of no delay, I concluded to stay, rather than have it wait for me. I do not know how long it may take us, but I should think it cannot exceed a week, when I shall immediately return to you. By that time some certain judgment may be formed of the enemy's intentions of leaving town, on which my journey to Yorktown will depend.

June 11th, 1778.—I wrote the above and waited for an opportunity to forward it, which I have not met with; the other gentlemen have not arrived yet, so that I am idling away my time here. The Commissioners have formally announced their arrival in a letter directed to the General with all his titles. Sir Harry Clinton requested a safe-conduct for Dr. Ferguson, Secretary to the Commissioners, to go to Congress, which has been refused. Nothing new from Philadelphia since I wrote the above.

On the 18th, the British retreated from Philadelphia, and on the 20th, Mr. Reed writes: "The enemy evacuated this place on Thursday. I came in the same evening, and it exhibited a new and curious scene; some gloomy countenances, but more joyful ones. Shops shut up, and all in great anxiety and suspense."

General Arnold was immediately put in command of the City, under strict injunctions from Congress and the Commander-in-chief, to protect property and peaceable individuals, and to suppress every species of persecution, insult, or abuse. These orders were carried into execution, and no disturbance of any kind occurred.

No sooner had the British evacuated the City, than Washington, relieved from the restraint which had so long controlled him, put his whole army, calling in all his outposts, in pursuit of the retreating enemy. He again crossed the Delaware at Coryell's, the British army for a time pursuing a course which rendered it very uncertain whether they meant to move to New York by the upper passage of the Raritan, or by the way of

South Amboy. On the 22d of June, Arnold called a meeting of such of the inhabitants of Philadelphia as were disposed to act as volunteers, and secured the services of a small detachment, who were to follow in the rear of the British army. General Reed was probably either with this volunteer party, or with another detachment under his friend Moylan. His own correspondence is silent on the subject, but on the 23d he appears to have been the bearer of the following hurried letter to Washington.

MOYLAN TO WASHINGTON.*

Trenton, 23d of June, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

General Reed was down with me in view of the enemy. He can therefore inform you of every thing material. I have ordered Colonel White with a squadron of horse into the rear of the enemy, whose van I believe to be at this time at Allentown. He will keep me constantly advised of what passes in the rear, and the remainder of the horse will be engaged on their front and left flank. You may depend on having the earliest intelligence of their motions, that I can with my own observations and of the officers under me, collect. I have the honour to be, dear sir, yours,

STEPHEN MOYLAN.

(Per General Reed.)

From this time he continued with the Commander-in-chief till after the battle of Monmouth, and during that day was with General Cadwalader, probably attached to Washington's Staff, or reconnoitring in advance. During the action his horse was killed. It is not necessary here to review the perplexed incidents of the affair of the 28th of June, or to consider the military controversies which sprang out of it. The following characteristic letter from Charles Lee, the hero or victim of that day, its very penmanship showing the uncontrolled passions of the writer, has reference to it, and is among General Reed's papers. It is the last that appears to have ever passed between them.

* MS. letter in the Department of State at Washington.

CHARLES LEE TO MR. REED.

North Castle, y^e July 22d, 1778.**DEAR REED,**

Though it may appear somewhat paradoxical, I must say that your letter has filled me with astonishment, anger, and pleasure. I am astonished that a man of your clear understanding should have confused matters so strangely as you seem to have done on the subject of my letters to the printer at Trenton, and to yourself. I am pleased in your having confirmed me in the opinion I had entertained of your regard and friendship, and I am angry that you should suppose me for a single moment capable of availing myself of some expressions you had made use of in a confidential letter, to embroil you with a man that the public interest certainly and perhaps your personal concerns render it necessary you should be on good terms with. You suppose I was fermented to an unusual warmth when I wrote those two letters; but if you had considered yourself coolly all circumstances, I am inclined to think you would have reasoned very differently; the fact is this: at a moment when a most atrocious attack was made on my fame and fortunes, a printed letter was put into my hands, containing (what I still assert to be) an invidious, false, and dishonest relation of the affair of the 28th. Stung to the quick, and knowing enough of the nature of mankind, that when rightly or wrongly they are deeply prepossessed, their pride or obstinacy renders 'em loath to be undeceived, I thought it prudent and incumbent to address this note, which it seems has given such dreadful offence, to Mr. Collins.* This step may for aught I know, have been hasty and imprudent, but I declare, were it undone, I should on the coolest deliberation do it. After I had wrote and sealed this note, I was told by several persons that you were the author. I would not or could not give credit to the report; but, however, such was the uneasiness that the bare possibility of its being a fact created in me, that I could not rest without taking the most expeditious means of clearing up the point; for to my own honour I must say it, that nothing equally shocks my nature with the idea that those of whom I have once formed a high opinion, whose friendship I have courted, and flatter myself to have obtained, whose talents I respect, and whose qualities I love, should turn out the reverse of what I thought 'em. And I think you have no reason to doubt that you stood in this state of relation to me. In this, if I may so express it, friendly agitation of uneasiness, I wrote to you and believe sent it by the same hand as I did that to the printer. When I met you at Morristown you cleared up the point infinitely to my satisfaction, and if anything further is necessary to be said on the subject, I most sincerely ask both you and myself pardon for

* Isaac Collins, for many years the printer and publisher of the Trenton Gazette.

having for a single instant harboured so offensive a notion. You tell me I am much sunk in the public esteem and confidence. All I can say in reply is, that if a community for whom I have sacrificed everything can so rashly form conclusions, they and not I are the immediate objects of compassion. You tell me this is a time I have occasion for friends. As a man of society I wish, and ever shall wish for a number of friends, the greatest number the more the honour and pleasure; but if you mean friends to support my cause on the present occasion, I despise the thought. I ask only for common justice. I know I am conscious that nothing but cabal, artifices, power, and iniquity, can tarnish my name for a moment, but if they are to prevail now on the community as to myself,—impavidum ferient ruinæ. No attack it seems can be made on General Washington, but it must recoil on the assailant. I never entertained the most distant wish or intention of attacking General Washington. I have ever honoured and respected him as a man and as a citizen, but if the circle which surrounds him choose to erect him into an infallible Divinity, I shall certainly prove a heretic, and if great as he is, he can be persuaded to attempt wounding everything I ought to hold dear, he must thank his priests if his Deityship gets scratched in the scuffle. When you say that I have now put it out of the power of my friends, in and out of Congress, to offer a word in my defence, upon my honour I know not what you mean. I can only surmise from it that my particular friends have suffered their minds to be carried away in the general torrent of delusion, raised by all the wicked arts that hell can prompt to its ministers. I repeat, I demand nothing from the public but justice. I have been grossly, villainously dealt with; and the dread of no power on earth shall prevent me from exposing the wickedness of my persecutors. I wish not to attack, but must. It is my duty to defend, and if this is thought dangerous, I must observe that the blood and treasure expended in this war has been expended in vain; as North and Mansfield had they succeeded, could not possibly have established a more odious despotism. As to you, my dear Reed, I still have all the reason possible to rank you, as I have ever done, one of the first in my esteem and affection, and I flatter myself that when you are better informed, that good opinion you had of me will rather be augmented than diminished.

C. LEE.*

* There is among the MSS. of Mr. Morris, a letter from Lee, dated Berkley County, Virginia, 16 June, 1781, filled with very virulent denunciation of Mr. Reed and his friends. It is curiously illustrative of his crazed intellect. A few weeks before the date of the letter in the text, Lee had written to Mr. Morris a letter of bitter vituperation of Washington and Wayne.—(Morris MSS. 3d July, 1778.) "Such," says he, "is my recompense for having twice extricated this man (Washington) from perdition, and now having given him the only victory he ever tasted," &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1778.

Arrival of Lord Carlisle, Mr. Eden, and Governor Johnstone—Conciliatory propositions—Letters of Mr. De Berdt and Governor Johnstone to Mr. Reed—Mr. Reed's answer—Johnstone's Letter to Mr. Morris—Lord Carlisle's Letters from Philadelphia—Agency of Mrs. Elizabeth Ferguson—Duché's Letter—Mrs. Ferguson's Interview with Governor Johnstone, and Letter to Mr. Reed—Attempt to bribe Mr. Reed—Johnstone's Declaration—Dr. Ferguson's Letter—Lord Carlisle's Letter from New York—Governor Johnstone's speech in Parliament—Mrs. Ferguson's Narrative—Dr. Ferguson's Letter—Mr. Reed's Pamphlet.

THE arrival of the British Commissioners in the summer of 1778, and their fruitless attempts at conciliatory negotiation, are leading incidents in General Reed's biography. It shows the high consideration in which he was held, that, both in 1776 when Lord Howe made the first attempt at conciliation, and in 1778, when the joint commission renewed it, Mr. Reed's influence was specially invoked. During the Revolution, the diplomacy of the British ministry was, if possible, less dexterous and successful than their military policy. They were always a little too late. Lord Howe arrived a few days after the irrevocable measure of Independence was adopted; and Lord Carlisle and his colleagues did not sail from Great Britain till some weeks after the news of the French alliance was on its way to America, and Congress by its resolution of the 22d April, 1778, had pledged themselves to the world against the very propositions offered.* Lord North introduced his conciliatory propositions into Parliament on the 17th February, and the Commissioners sailed on the 22d of April. On the 2d of May, Washington and his soldiers were rejoicing at the intelligence of the alliance with France.

The terms of the conciliatory propositions are well known. They went much farther than colonial discontent had ever

* *Journals of Congress*, vol. iv. p. 229.

asked the Crown to go, but stopping short of Independence, were at once felt to be inadmissible. In the selection of the Commissioners, the Ministry believed they had shown great discrimination. Beside the three military commanders, the Commissioners were the Earl of Carlisle, Mr. William Eden, and George Johnstone, once Governor of Florida, and for many years an active opposition member of the House of Commons. The last appointment was thought to be especially acceptable, as Johnstone had been throughout his public career an avowed friend of colonial rights, and a very steady opposition member. Much reliance was manifestly had on his influence, and his exertions.*

The private correspondence and confidential arrangements, the secret service of the commission seem to have been entrusted chiefly to Governor Johnstone, who had furnished himself with private letters to Mr. Reed, Mr. Morris, and other leading men in the American councils, on which he seems to have largely relied. Amongst others, he had secured the good offices and confidence of Mr. De Berdt, who gave him a private letter of introduction to his brother-in-law. On the 6th of June the Commissioners reached Philadelphia, and on the 10th or 11th, the two following letters were forwarded to Camp.

Mr. De Berdt in his letter explains the views and plans of the Commissioners before they left England. His sanguine confidence and credulity seem to have had no limit.

MR. DE BERDT TO MR. REED.

London, April 10th, 1778.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Although the expectations given you in my letter of last spring, by Lord Howe,† have not been fulfilled, and my raised ideas fallen, I venture once more to address you on the same subject by one of the new Commissioners,

* In the Appendix No. IV., will be found such materials in illustration of the personal character of the British Commissioners, as the author has been able to collate. To Mr. Bancroft, he is indebted for some unpublished materials of great interest.

† *Supra*, p. 197.

going out to America, and Governor Johnstone does me the honour to take charge of my packets, with whom I have fully conversed, and respecting whom I have much to say.

But I fear my opinion can weigh but little with you, when you may so justly censure my credulity, and call me to account for my last misinformation, nor can I now with propriety explain myself. An opportunity will, I trust, present when I have no doubt your good sense and candour will acquit me. Actuated by the same motives of love for my country, regard for America and general philanthropy, I beg leave to recommend Governor Johnson as a Commissioner of PEACE, and a steady proved friend to America and its just rights. Since his return from his government of Florida, he has been steady to your cause in Parliament, and, in general, voted against the oppressive acts which have brought this country into a situation truly deplorable; he despises the men, censures their measures, and abhors the cruelty and vindiction which some of the acts of our military have disgraced the page of history.* When I found the Governor had so acted, and possessed such sentiments, my ambition was that he should know you and your principles, and everything favoured my wish. He said that a General Robertson, who was some time since introduced to the King, and mentioned your name to his Majesty with great respect, who had formerly met with you at Boston, spoke of you in terms that did honour to your head and heart, and further, you were the very man he had wished on arrival, to commune and consult with. This afforded me infinite satisfaction, and brought on a freedom of conversation in which he assured me that everything short of a *total* independence was intended to be granted you, and if ever that could be proved the absolute sense of the people at large, declared by a new Congress chosen after these terms should be made known, he should give his assent as a member of the British Senate. Every other difficulty was obviated and provided against; your paper money should be funded, and secured by this country, and two or three millions lent if desired; your governors and lawgivers chosen among yourselves; in short, la carte blanche should be sent you.

He then thought proper to ask my opinion. I said it was greatly to be feared the affection of the people was totally alienated by neglect, oppression and persecution, from this King and Government; that Independence was gone abroad as the object they had been fighting for, and would rather

* William Livingston, in a letter to Mr. Laurens on 8th May, on the receipt of the news of Johnstone's appointment says, "It must be extremely mortifying to the ministry to stoop to the minority for their interest with us to make us relish their terms of accommodation. For the letter from Governor Johnstone must have been procured by downright ministerial coaxing. That gentleman has too much sense, and is too great a friend to America to think he ought to have any dependent connexion with such an abandoned, degenerate people."—*Sedgwick's Memoir*, p. 287.

be accepted than terms of greater interest, and that the treaty with France might preclude a power of rescinding; but as a continued connexion with us was their duty and interest, not to allow it but on a full conviction that it was the real sense of the people at large.

At my particular request, to support my opinions, to verify my assertions, and to pay you that mark of respect which your abilities and conduct deserve, the Governor has written you a letter with the outlines of his embassy, which I had the honour to peruse, and now enclose it.

There is reason to believe your Commissioners in France have said the terms to be offered are more for your national interest than independence; if so, let me plead for my country's honour and your happiness, willing, though late, to attach you to her by interest, that bond of nations. What! my brother, my friends, my countrymen in alliance and amity with the sworn enemies of British liberty and the Protestant religion, must I address you with the unmeaning fawning *A monsieur, monsieur*, instead of honest Mr. Must I forget my good old father's pride that America was the glory and strength of this country? Connect yourself there, and promote her union with us. Can the descendants of Englishmen bear the thoughts of our submitting to the insults of France? We, who, as Lord Chatham lately expressed himself in the House, have stood the Danish irruptions, the irruptions of other nations, the inroads of the Scotch, the Norman conquests, the threatened invasion by the famous Spanish Armada, and the various efforts of the Bourbon compacts.* No, I will hope there are some among you that will ever think themselves insecure and unhappy unconnected with the Parent country. If we have ruled you with a rod of iron, we now see our error, and offer you any terms but such as affect our dignity and honour. Such terms refused, what is to be feared but that like Sampson, our strength having been for a time impaired by treachery, it will renew, and we shall make one great effort of revenge, involve you in greater distress, and fall ourselves in the attempt; which God forbid. May He reform, but not destroy us, inspiring us all with wisdom and moderation! I hope and pray that when the still voice of Peace and Reason breathes through your land, we, confessing our sins and ignorance, and offering everything but giving up our natural rights, a lasting union may take place, in which the honour

* This was the celebrated dying speech of the Earl of Chatham on the 7th April, 1778, on the Duke of Richmond's motion to withdraw the troops from America. Several reports of the speech will be found in the Chatham Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 518. Additional point is given by one of these reports (p. 523) to the passage quoted by Mr. De Berdt. "He spoke of a Spanish invasion, of a French invasion, of a Dutch invasion. Many Lords may have read of them in history; and some Lords (looking keenly at Lord Mansfield) may perhaps remember a Scotch invasion." Lord Chatham died on the 11th of May.

of this country, and the interest and happiness of America will be equally considered.

After referring to domestic affairs, Mr. De Berdt resumes the strain of exaggerated sentiment and praise.

The friendship which subsists between me and Governor Johnstone will incline him to excuse the trouble of forwarding any letters from you or my friends to me, which conveyance I trust you will improve. His letter to you I have read with astonishing pleasure, and if my letters by Lord Howe did not haunt and upbraid me, I should be liberal in the recommendations of him, and if language is the portrait of the heart, he may be looked up to with pleasure and hope. Good God! Is it possible that the King's servants can hold such language after the recent opprobrious epithets, and one of his Commissioners say to my *Rebel brother*, as you have been called, "Your pen and sword have both been used with glory and advantage, and must ever command my warmest friendship and veneration. Nothing can surpass the glory you have acquired in arms," &c. May the truth of every line fill you with consolation, but lose not the feelings of the Christian in the resentment of the man, and as you have nobly fought, act more nobly and forgive.

It strikes me publishing the Governor's letter would have a good effect, and I heartily wish it, but leave it to your better judgment, but let it be known in the American world that I value the people, rejoice in every event that makes them happy, and as far as my little influence extended, have rendered them assistance, and shall be happy in every opportunity of promoting their happiness and interest. May the God of all wisdom preside in your Councils, may the King of kings rule in and over you, and may the Prince of Peace inspire you with his glorious principle. Such is the ardent prayer and fervent wish of your affectionate friend,

DENNIS DE BERDT.*

The enclosure from Governor Johnstone which in Mr. De Berdt's simple judgment was calculated to produce so great results was plausibly and dexterously prepared. It was as follows:

* On the day of the date of Mr. De Berdt's letter (10th April) Governor Johnstone said in the House of Commons, "I do not despair of the success of the Commission with the powers it has at present. If the Americans are not actually divided in their measures, they are yet so unsettled in their opinions that we ought to try whether they will be divided."—*Parl. Reg.* x. 153.

TO GENERAL REED.

London, April 11, 1778.

SIR,

Your near and worthy relation, Mr. Dennis De Berdt, has made me happy by favouring me with a letter to you. I have been informed by General Robertson of your great worth and consequence in the unhappy disputes that have subsisted between Great Britain and her descendants. Your pen and your sword have both been used with glory and advantage in vindicating the rights of mankind, and of that community of which you was a part. Such a conduct as the first, and superior of all human duties, must ever command my warmest friendship and veneration. In the midst of these affecting scenes my feeble voice has not been wanting to stop the evils in their progress, and to remove, on a large and liberal footing, the causes of all jealousy, that every subject of the Empire might live equally free, and secure in the enjoyment of the blessings of life; not one part dependent on the will of another, with opposite interests, but a general union, on terms of perfect security and mutual advantage. During the contest I am free to confess my wishes have ever been, that America might so far prevail as to oblige this country to see their error, and to reflect and reason fairly in the case of others, heirs to the same privileges with themselves. It has pleased God in his justice so to dispose of events, that this Kingdom is at length convinced of her folly and her faults. A Commission under Parliamentary authority is now issued for settling in a manner consistent with that union of force, on which the safety of both parties depends, all the differences which have, or can subsist between Great Britain and America, short of a total separation of interests. In this commission I am an unworthy associate. Though no man can feel the desire of cementing in peace and friendship every member of what was called the British Empire stronger than myself; yet I am sensible it might have fallen to the lot of many persons better qualified to attain the end proposed. All I can claim is ardent zeal and upright intentions; and, when I reflect that this negotiation must depend much more upon perfect integrity than refinement of understanding; where a sensible, magnanimous people will see their own interest, and carefully guard their own honour in every transaction, I am more inclined to hope, from the good will I have always borne them, I am not altogether unqualified for the task, if it be (as I hope it is) the disposition of good men in the provinces to prefer freedom in conjunction with Great Britain, to an union with the ancient enemy of both. If it be their generous inclination to forget recent injuries, and recall to their remembrance former benefits, I am in hopes we may yet be great and happy. I am sure the people in America will find, in my brother Commissioners and myself, a fair and cheerful concurrence in adjusting every point to their utmost wish not inconsistent, (as I said before,) with a beneficial union of interests, which is an object of our

commission. Nothing can surpass the glory you have acquired in arms, except the generous magnanimity of meeting, on the terms of justice and equality, after demonstrating to the world that the fear of force could have no influence in that decision. The man who can be instrumental in bringing us all to act once more in harmony, and to unite together the various powers which this contest has drawn forth, will deserve more from the King and the people, from patriotism, humanity, friendship, and all the tender ties that are affected by the quarrel and reconciliation that ever was yet bestowed on humankind.

This letter from Mr. De Berdt I shall consider as an introduction to you; which line of communication I shall endeavour by every means to improve by public demonstration of respect, or private friendship, as your answer may enable me.

I am, with great respect, sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

GEO. JOHNSTONE.

This letter was at once shown to General Washington, and other gentlemen at Camp, and on the 14th the following courteous but decided answer was sent.

TO THE HONOURABLE GEORGE JOHNSTONE, ESQ.,

One of the Commissioners, &c., &c.

Camp at Valley Forge, June 14th, 1778.

SIR,

I take the earliest opportunity to acknowledge your favour of the 11th of April, and to thank you for your obliging care in forwarding the packet which accompanied it. The partiality of my friends in England has greatly overrated my services and consequence in the present dispute. I claim little other beyond that of zeal for the interests of my country, and entertaining a very high veneration for those illustrious characters who have long, though unsuccessfully, patronised her rights and those of mankind. America, sir, has seen and admired your seasonable though unavailing efforts to prevent the dismemberment of the British empire, and place us on the great and generous scale of equal freedom with yourselves. This must be your consolation as well as your glory, while the event affords a most instructive lesson to other nations and senates, how to treat in future their Johnstones, their Burkes, their Barrès, their Chathams, and their Camdens. If it is within the line of human events to reconcile the people of this country to a submission to the sovereignty of Britain, the Ministry have, in this appointment, (really honoured by your acceptance,) shown some degree of wisdom, as it may rescue them from the imputation of repeating an insidious

manceuvre to divide, disarm, and enslave us. But you will so soon receive the sense of Congress on this important point, that any opinion from me would be equally useless and improper. I shall only say that, after the unparalleled injuries and insults this country has received from the men who now direct the affairs of Britain, a negotiation under their auspices has much to struggle with. I speak from no authority, but can easily conceive that America would willingly exchange the calamities of war for the blessings of peace, and prove as faithful in alliance as she has been great in arms. If, therefore, the resolution of Congress should be unfriendly to your present views,—if they should suppose that all confidence and affection, the only grounds of harmony, and surest support of all government, are so erased as to leave no hope of a happy reunion, I cannot but flatter myself, that men of virtue and enlarged views on both sides of this great question will endeavour to close the scene of blood on the only terms now practicable, and that Great Britain will give up her visionary schemes of conquest and empire for the solid benefits she may yet derive from our amity and commerce. I will even hope, sir, for your aid in so good a work. Should the same fatal influence which blasted your former salutary counsels, again frustrate your humane and generous purpose, come to America, the future asylum of the brave and virtuous from every quarter of the world. She will think herself honoured to receive into her bosom so illustrious a citizen; his eloquence will not then be spent in vain; nor his eminent worth pass unrewarded. My desire to make the earliest acknowledgments of the honour you have done me, has prevented my troubling you with a few lines for my friends in England, who are interested in the welfare of my family. My brother's letter and the politeness of yours encourage me to take this liberty, which I shall do by some early opportunity. Too many cannot present to show the very great personal respect and esteem with which

I am, sir,

Your most obedient and very humble servant.*

It is now ascertained that this letter never reached its destination, owing, no doubt, to the difficulties of communication between the camp and the city. Had it been received, its clear, decided tone might have deterred Governor Johnstone from the busy, and unequivocally corrupt means of intercourse to which he soon resorted. Not receiving any answer from General Reed, he wrote on the 16th to Robert Morris in still more explicit terms. There was no misunderstanding such language as he then used.

* In a pamphlet published by General Reed in 1779, he expressed a doubt as to whether this letter ever reached its destination. In or about the year 1843, it

"I believe," he wrote to Mr. Morris, "the men who have conducted the affairs of America incapable of being influenced by improper motives. But in all such transactions there is risk, and I think that whoever ventures should naturally follow the fortunes of those who have steered the vessel in the storm, and brought her safely to port. I think that Washington and the President (Mr. Laurens) have a right to every favour that grateful nations can bestow, if they could once more unite our interests, and spare the miseries and devastations of war. I wish above all things to see you, and hope you will so contrive it."*

The following letter from Lord Carlisle shows the state of things in Philadelphia at the time these plans were on foot.

THE EARL OF CARLISLE TO GEORGE SELWYN.†

Philadelphia, Wednesday, 10th June.

We arrived at this place, after a voyage of six weeks, on Saturday last, and found everything here in great confusion; the army upon the point of leaving the town, and about three thousand of the miserable inhabitants embarked on board our ships, to convey them from a place where they conceive they would receive no mercy from those who will take possession after us, to follow the army and starve, when we can no longer continue to feed them. But I will dwell no longer upon calamities which nothing but an acceptance of the terms we offer can prevent.

Our letters are sent to Congress this morning. I will endeavour to procure you a copy, if the vessel does not sail too soon. For many reasons which I dare not commit to paper, we have thought fit to bring forward at

came into the hands of Mr. Peter Force, the compiler of the American Archives. In his possession it now is. It is evidently an original letter, with the seal and superscription on it. Mr. Force is unable to ascertain from whom he received these papers, or the others which accompanied it.

* Governor Johnstone seems to have had some previous personal acquaintance, with Mr. Morris, among whose unpublished papers is a letter from Johnstone, dated House of Commons, 5th February, 1778, informing Mr. Morris that he had had a hint of the conciliatory movement of the government, and begging him to exert his influence to prevent any connexion with France. It is a curious and important letter. On his arrival in America, he wrote to Mr. Dana.—*Almon*, vol. vi. p. 8.

† "George Selwyn and his Contemporaries," by John Hencage Jesse. London, 1844. Vol. iii., p. 280.

once all the powers delegated to us. I hope by the next mail to be able to talk more fully on the subject, but dare not at this moment.

I am lodged in one of the best houses in the town, and indeed it is a very excellent one, perfectly well furnished. I am not, I own, quite at my ease; for coming into a gentleman's house, without asking his leave, taking possession of all the best apartments, and placing a couple of sentries at his door, using his plate, &c., &c., are very repugnant to my disposition. I make him and his wife a visit every day, talk politics with them, and we are the best friends in the world. They are very agreeable, sensible people, and you never would be out of their company.*

I have this morning at 5 o'clock, been taking a ride into the country about ten miles, grieved am I to say, eight miles beyond our possessions. Our lines extend only two, and the provincial army is posted very strongly about six and twenty miles distant. This is a market day, and to protect the people bringing in provisions, which otherwise they would not dare to do, large detachments, to the amount of above two thousand men, are sent forward into the country. We also profited by this safeguard, and I attended the General, Sir Henry Clinton, as far as Germantown, a place as remarkable and as much an object of curiosity to those who have any respect for the present times, as Edge Hill or Naseby Field is to those whose veneration is only excited by their great grandfathers. We have had no answer from the Congress. They may send us one to New York, for which place we must instantly embark. The weather is much more hot here than in any part of Italy, but, as well as I remember, you do not mind heat. I flatter myself everything is to your satisfaction where you are, and that the difficulties of the journey were much increased in the description. I am very well, but a good deal worn by business and anxiety. Things go ill, and will not go better. We have done our duty, so we ought not to be involved with those who have *lost* this country.

I am, my dear George,
Yours, most affectionately and sincerely,

CARLISLE.

The last sentence of this letter shows how early, and thoroughly, at least one of the Commissioners desponded as to the success of the mission; for Lord Carlisle anticipated no good from it even before he received intelligence that Congress had refused to hold intercourse with them, or to give a passport to Dr. Ferguson to come to York.

* This house was Mr. Powell's, in Third Street above Spruce, on the western side of the way, afterwards occupied by William Rawle, Esq. Mrs. Powell, who was a lady of great accomplishment, even within the memory of the author, was a sister of Thomas Willing of Philadelphia.

Governor Johnstone seems to have thought it worth while to make a further attempt at indirect negotiation, and having written to Mr. Morris, and received no answer from General Reed, he resumed his plans in another mode.

Among the individuals, who on the arrival of the British, had remained in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, was Mrs. Elizabeth Ferguson, an American lady married to Hugh Henry Ferguson, a loyalist, and at the time, Commissary of prisoners in the English service. This lady was descended from a distinguished Pennsylvanian family, and was a person of accomplishment and intelligence.* Her position was such as made her in a measure the object of respectful consideration by individuals on both sides of the pending contest, for while her family connexions and personal associations were generally with the loyalists, she was, as a female and a native Pennsylvanian, kindly treated by the leading patriots. In the month of October, 1777, immediately after the British took possession of Philadelphia, Mrs. Ferguson was the bearer of a letter of a very offensive character, from the Reverend Mr. Duché to General Washington, for which she received a dignified and emphatic rebuke. "I yesterday," says Washington, writing to the President of Congress, "through the hands of Mrs. Ferguson of Græme Park, received a letter of a very curious and extraordinary nature, from Mr. Duché, which I have thought proper to transmit to Congress. To this ridiculous, illiberal performance I made a short reply, by desiring the bearer of it, (Mrs. Ferguson,) if she should hereafter, by any accident meet with Mr. Duché, to tell him I should have returned it unopened if I had had any idea of the contents, observing at the same time, that I highly disapproved the intercourse she seemed to have been carrying on, and expected

* Mrs. Ferguson was the daughter of Dr. Thomas Græme, colonial collector of the port of Philadelphia, and Anne, daughter of Sir William Keith, Governor of Pennsylvania. She was born in 1739, and died in the neighbourhood of her country seat, Græme Park, in Montgomery County, on 23d February, 1801. In Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania, vol. iii. 394, will be found an agreeable, though rather fanciful memoir of this lady, taken from the Port Folio. In the Philadelphia Library are two manuscript volumes, of a metrical translation of "Telemache," by Mrs. Ferguson.

it would be discontinued. Notwithstanding the author's assertion, I cannot but suspect that the measure did not originate with him, and that he was induced to it by the hope of establishing his interests and peace more effectually with the enemy."*

To this lady, who at a later period had again returned to Philadelphia, under a pass from the Commander-in-chief, in order to bid her husband farewell, Governor Johnstone applied, and sought through her, by verbal communication, to effect some negotiation with the American leaders.

Her own narrative of what occurred, verified by oath, and published at a time when she had no desire to exaggerate the intimacy in which these disclosures occurred, is as follows :

"As the house of a very particular friend of mine, Mr. Charles Stedman, happened to be the place appointed for Governor Johnstone's residence during his stay in this city, I was in it the greatest part of the time the Commissioners were here. Three times I was in company with Governor Johnstone; he expressed great desire to have been admitted to have passed the lines, or that his secretary should have had some intercourse of a liberal kind, (as he termed it,) with people in power. I own that I did at that time look on Governor Johnstone as a friend to America, who wished some person would step forth and act a mediatorial part, and suggest something to stop the effusion of blood which was like to ensue, if the war was carried on in its full vigour. The two former times of the three that I talked with Governor Johnstone, the conversation was so general, and his declarations so warm in favour of the interests of America, that I regarded him as an estimable character, and most sincerely wished he could have had a free intercourse with some of the sensible Whigs without the lines; but from first to last of these conversations, I uniformly told him, that I thought he cherished a delusive idea, namely, that the Congress kept the true sense of the people from the public, and that if that was fairly to be come at, independence would lose ground.

"I am sure I can say, speaking within bounds, I repeated half a dozen times to him, that I believed, if the votes of the people were or could be impartially taken, they would give the decision in favour of independency; but this sentiment he never coincided in.†

* *Sparks's Washington*, v. p. 95, where, and in the Appendix, will be found all the particulars of this affair, though Mr. Duché's letter is not published. See also "Wilson's Memoirs of Bishop White."

† This notion was a cherished delusion of the Commissioners in 1778. It is exhibited in all their public acts, and was no doubt strengthened by their con-

"At this time my mind was much engaged with the thoughts of presenting a memorial to the Supreme Executive Council, then at Lancaster, as I thought it of some consequence to get it laid before that honourable body, previous to the time my husband was cited to appear, (June the 24th.) He was there summoned as guilty of high treason, on the idea of his being a subject of the States. Now as he was by birth a Briton, and left this near a year before the Declaration of Independency, I was encouraged by some gentlemen, learned in the law, to point out that he could not with propriety come under the description of the bulk of the proscribed.

"Governor Johnstone heard me say I was going on this errand; and the conversation passed between him and myself, about a quarter of an hour before he left Mr. Stedman's house. In Mr. Stedman's tea-room, to the best of my memory, on the 16th of June, between the hours of ten and eleven in the morning, Governor Johnstone sent me a manuscript book, to read the morning he went off, but in so hasty a way, that he asked three or four times for it, before it was possible to have read it a quarter through; the general vein that prevailed in it was, pointing out the many advantages arising from a reunion with Britain, and a commercial intercourse, and several good things I believe were in it, but I thought it much too prolix to be of general utility. I returned the book to him in Mr. Stedman's tea-room and was going out, when he resumed the thread of politics.

"'Mrs. Ferguson,' says Governor Johnstone, 'this is a most unhappy dispute; can nothing be fallen upon to mitigate matters?' 'God grant there could, Governor Johnstone,' returned I; 'you are a person in power; you know how ardently I wish for peace,' for I before that, had said to Governor Johnstone that if he would be instrumental, by his representations at home, to effect peace, it would give him comfort in his dying hour, when all earthly honours and views of ambition would be light in the balance; and I again repeated, 'I am certain nothing short of independence will be accepted.' 'I am told,' replied he, 'that Morris and Reed have a great deal to say in your politics.' I answered, 'I believe they have. They are both gentlemen of distinguished characters for good sense and patriotic principles.' 'I know something of Reed,' says Johnstone; 'I forwarded letters to him of Mr. De Berdt's; I knew Mr. De Berdt well; I wish I could see Mr. Reed and Mr. Morris, but particularly Mr. Reed; I think I could say many things to him that would be for the advantage of settling this contest.' 'I wish you could, sir; I dare say that if you were to converse with either of those gentlemen, it would be to your mutual satisfaction, and I think it is a great pity that you have not an opportunity.' 'I heard,' says he, 'that Reed has a great deal to say with Washington.' 'I believe, sir,' returned

versations on their arrival with the loyalists in Philadelphia. Such was the burthen of most of the letters from loyalists to Great Britain, during the war, or at least before the evacuation of Philadelphia. In Duché's letter to Washington, he dwelt at length on the same idea.

I, 'that General Reed stands very well with General Washington,' (for I always made it a point to give our officers their titles, immediately when any of the British gentlemen omitted them.) 'I had thoughts,' says Johnstone, 'of applying to both these gentlemen, (meaning Mr. Reed and Mr. Morris,) for their good offices, but the fewer people one applies to the better. but I should be particularly glad of Mr. Reed's influence in this affair, Mrs. Ferguson,' says he, and I think he looked a little confused, 'if this affair should be settled in the way we wish, we shall have many pretty things in our power, and if Mr. Reed, after well considering the nature of the dispute, can, conformable to his conscience and view of things, exert his influence to settle the contest, he may command ten thousand guineas and the best post in the government, and if you should see him, I could wish you would convey that idea to him.' I own I felt hurt and shocked, for I regarded the hint as indelicate, and from that moment Mr. Johnstone appeared to me in a different point of light. He then was turning out of the room. The Commodore had sent for him and General Clinton two or three times that morning while we were together. If he read countenances as well as I believe he did, he must immediately have seen disgust strongly painted on mine. I desired him to stay a moment. 'Sir,' says I, 'since you have opened your mind so freely to me, allow me to suggest a few hints with the same freedom.' 'By all means, madam.' 'Do you not think, sir, that Mr. Reed will look upon such a mode of obtaining his influence as a bribe?' (I really made use of that plain term.) 'Do you think so, madam?' 'I really, sir, should apprehend so.' 'By no means, madam; this mode of proceeding is customary in all negotiations, and one may very honourably make it a man's interest to step forth in a cause.' 'I know little of negotiations,' returned I, 'but this appears to me, that if it be Mr. Reed's judgment that America should give up the point of independence, he will say so, if he has any influence in her counsels, without fee or reward; and if he is of a different opinion, no pecuniary emoluments should lead him to give a contrary vote.' He said he did not see the matter in the same point of light, exactly as I did, and abruptly bade me farewell; and I believe, if his heart had that moment been seen, he was vexed he had gone so far."*

Displeased as Mrs. Ferguson describes herself, at the hint of this mode of negotiation, she appears to have lost no time in making to General Reed the communication which Johnstone had thus suggested; for on the next day, or the day but one after, she wrote and sent by a confidential messenger, the following mysterious note:

* It was on the same day that Governor Johnstone had this conversation, that he wrote to Mr. Morris.

TO GENERAL REED.

SIR,

Having occasion, on particular business, to go to Lancaster, I propose setting off, on Monday, from this place. It would afford me considerable satisfaction, could I be favoured with an hour's conversation with you, Sir, previous to my going to Lancaster. In order to effect this, I propose going near the camp, where, if you will be good enough to meet me at any place you will name, within a mile or two of Valley Forge, it would vastly oblige me. I should have been at Lancaster last week, but being in the City to take leave of my husband, I was refused a pass on the day I proposed leaving the town. I enclose a letter Colonel Boudinot had from General Roberdeau, pointing out the necessity of being soon at Lancaster. I also enclose a letter Mr. Stockton has wrote relative to Mr. Ferguson's proscription, which I must beg the favour of you to consider and give your advice on when we meet. At all events, I would wish much to see you before I go. If one day would suit you better than another, I would postpone or forward a day in order to see you, though Monday is the time proposed. The Valley Forge is about twenty-four miles from this, so that if I set off from this in the morning, I shall be able to see you in the afternoon. Be so obliging as to appoint the place, but I would wish to avoid passing through the camp, but any little cottage or farm-house would be agreeable to me to see you in. However it may affect my own private concerns, I cannot avoid sincerely congratulating you, Sir, on the prospect of your entering, once more, your own house in the City, where, that you may enjoy every kind of domestic peace and comfort, is the sincere wish of, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,
ELIZABETH FERGUSON.*

P. S. Since writing the above, I hear the camp is moved, therefore, if this should reach you, I beg you will be so good as to point out where I shall see you, *as writing will not do.*

It is very clear that the writer desired to confer with General Reed on other topics than those which affected her personal interest, about which there was no occasion for secrecy or reserve. And so it proved. The British army evacuated Philadelphia on the 18th of June, and on the same day, General Reed came to the City; it was not, however, till the 21st, that he received Mrs. Ferguson's note, at the house of a friend where

* There is no date to this letter, but the internal evidence is, that it was written on or before the 18th June. It reached Mr. Reed on the 21st.

he was dining. He inquired of the bearer where Mrs. Ferguson was, and was informed she had come to town that morning, upon which he sent her word that being then engaged, he would wait upon her in the evening. He accordingly did so, and found her to all appearances waiting for him. She opened the conversation, by relating the difficulties and perplexities in which she found herself, what advice had been given her respecting Mr. Ferguson, and what her intentions had been. From this subject, the conversation turned to the British Commissioners, their business, and characters; when Mrs. Ferguson mentioned Governor Johnstone's lodging in the same house with her, and that she had frequently conversed with him on public affairs: she described him as a gentleman of great abilities and address, and possessed of many amiable qualities. That he had sketched a plan of settlement of our disputes on his passage, which he had permitted her to see, and that she had made some extracts from it, which she said she would communicate to him. She then added, that Governor Johnstone had expressed the most favourable sentiments of Mr. Reed, and of the part he had acted in the contest. General Reed mentioned, in acknowledgment of this, that he had received a letter from Johnstone at the Valley Forge, and his private packets with unbroken seals. Mrs. Ferguson then went on to say that Governor Johnstone had expressed great anxiety for a personal interview in order to secure his (Mr. Reed's) influence to promote the object of the Commissioners, viz.: A reunion between the two countries, and in such case, she added explicitly that Governor Johnstone had said that it could not be deemed improper or unbecoming in Government to take a favourable notice of such conduct, and if to his influence success were owing, General Reed might command ten thousand pounds, and any Colonial office in his Majesty's gift. A proposition thus explicit, and repeated by express authority, could not be, for a moment, misunderstood.

"When," says Mrs. Ferguson, in her exculpatory narrative, "I came to the most interesting part of our conversation, General Reed answered, without hesitation: 'My influence is but small, but were it as great as Governor Johnstone would insi-

nuate, the King of Great Britain has nothing within his gift that would tempt me.'"

With this, the conversation abruptly ended, and no further intercourse between the parties occurred. The Commissioners had retired to New York and Mr. Reed rejoined the army. The battle of Monmouth, and other important events succeeded, which engrossed public attention, nor did he resume his seat in Congress till July. Before this time it being known that Johnstone had written in a similar tone to Mr. Morris and Mr. Dana of Massachusetts, Mr. Reed considered it his duty to lay the whole subject before Congress, simply withholding the name of the lady. This scruple of delicacy, dictated no doubt by a reluctance to expose Mrs. Ferguson to popular resentment, if not to a criminal prosecution, was in vain. Suspicion was already directed to her, and on the 24th July, the Executive Council of Pennsylvania adopted a resolution calling for the name of the lady. The communication made by General Reed to Congress, as well as the disclosure of the letters to Mr. Morris produced great and natural excitement. But the arrival of M. Gerard, as the French Envoy, with the Treaty of Alliance, for a time occupied the attention of Congress, and prevented any action; in the mean time, the communications received from the Commissioners at New York remained unnoticed, and on the 11th of August Congress unanimously adopted a series of resolutions, reciting in the preamble, Mrs. Ferguson's agency, Governor Johnstone's letter of 11th April, 1778, to Mr. Reed, and his letter to Mr. Morris, of the 16th of June. They were as follows:

Tuesday, August 11th, 1778.

A DECLARATION.

Whereas George Johnstone, Esq., one of the British Commissioners for restoring peace in America, on the 11th of April last, did write and send a letter to Joseph Reed, Esq., a Member of Congress, containing this paragraph, viz.: "The man who can be instrumental in bringing us all to act once more in harmony, and to unite together the various powers which this contest has drawn forth, will deserve more from the king and the people, from patriotism, humanity, and all the tender ties that are affected by the quarrel and reconciliation, than ever was yet bestowed on humankind."

And whereas the said George Johnstone, Esq., on the sixteenth day of June last, wrote and sent a letter to Robert Morris, Esq., another member of Congress, containing this paragraph, viz.: "I believe the men who have conducted the affairs of America incapable of being influenced by improper motives; but in all such transactions there is risk, and I think, that whoever ventures should be secured, at the same time that honour and emolument should naturally follow the fortune of those, who have steered the vessel in the storm, and brought her safely to port. I think, Washington and the President have a right to every favour that grateful nations can bestow, if they could once more unite our interest and spare the miseries and devastations of war." Which letters were laid before Congress. And whereas the said Joseph Reed, Esq., hath in his place in Congress, declared that, "On Sunday, the 21st of June last, a few days after the evacuation of the City of Philadelphia by the British troops, he received a written communication from a married lady of character, having connexion with the British army, expressing a desire to see him on business which could not be committed to writing: that, attending the lady agreeable to her appointment in the evening, after some previous conversation respecting her particular connexions, the business and character of the British commissioners, and particularly of Governor Johnstone, (meaning the said George Johnstone, Esq,) were the subjects of general conversation, which being more confined, the lady enlarged upon the great talents and amiable qualities of that gentleman, and added that in several conversations with her, he (Governor Johnstone) had expressed the most favourable sentiments of him, (Mr. Reed,) and that it was particularly wished to engage his (Mr. Reed's) interest, to promote the objects of their commission, viz., a reunion between the two countries, if consistent with his principles and judgment; and that in such case it could not be deemed unbecoming or improper in government, (meaning the British,) to take a favourable notice of such conduct, and that in this instance, he (Mr. Reed) might have ten thousand pounds sterling, and any office in the Colonies (meaning these United States) in his Majesty's gift," (meaning the gift of his Britannic Majesty,) to which, finding an answer was expected, he (Mr. Reed) replied, "He was not worth purchasing, but such as he was, the King of Great Britain was not rich enough to do it." And whereas the said paragraph, written and sent as aforesaid by George Johnstone, Esq., and the said declaration made by Joseph Reed, Esq., call loudly upon Congress to express their sentiments upon them,

Resolved, That the contents of the said paragraphs, and the particulars in the said declaration, in the opinion of Congress, cannot but be considered as direct attempts to corrupt and bribe the Congress of the United States of America.

Resolved, That as Congress feel, so they ought to demonstrate, the highest and most pointed indignation against such daring and atrocious attempts to corrupt their integrity.

Resolved, That it is incompatible with the honour of Congress to hold any

manner of correspondence or intercourse with the said George Johnstone, Esq., especially to negotiate with him upon affairs in which the cause of liberty is interested.*

* Whilst these matters were in progress, Lord Carlisle thus describes the state of things at New York, in a letter to Selwyn, dated July 22d, 1778 :

DEAR GEORGE,

As this letter to you may pass through France, and will be certainly opened, I must use a caution which otherwise I should not do, in exposing our present situation. I must consider the King of France, or, what is worse, his minister, at your elbow, and reading my letter over your shoulder. In two words, then, we are blocked up by a French fleet of twelve sail of the line, and have Mr. Washington and Mr. Gates upon our backs. In private life I never knew any one interfere with other people's disputes, but that he heartily repented of it. We care as little at present for what is done behind our backs as what is said—and are under no uneasiness on that account. As for the French, it would be uncivil, as they have come so far, not to receive them as they deserve. When ambassadors go to China, they are frequently made to wait many weeks, till everything is prepared for their reception. In a little time we shall have made every preparation, and Monsieur d'Estaing may make his entry when he pleases. I went to look at him the other night, and saw him take an English ship. Lord Howe lies very near him, and we every day expect to hear of some event that may be very decisive, as his whole force is collected, and we are sending him down fire-ships as fast as we can fit them up.

Though I may reap no other advantage from crossing the Atlantic, I shall acquire at least some nautical and some military knowledge, for I pass my time chiefly with soldiers and sailors, though I must confess neither of them are much to my taste—I mean the sciences, for, as to the individuals, we have a great many agreeable people. I am well lodged; the country is beautiful beyond description; the climate the worst that I ever experienced. The heat is infinitely more insupportable than where you now are; but will change, perhaps, in the middle of the night, when we have left all the windows and doors open for air, to a sudden cold, sufficient to destroy the best constitution. This change of the weather commonly attacks the bowels, and occasions fluxes. I have been affected in this manner, but I hope I shall not feel it long. Poor Storer is confined to his bed, but I flatter myself there is nothing to apprehend in his disorder.

When you see before you the list of our misfortunes, I think I shall have your compassion. 1st, we are blocked up by a French fleet. 2d, we are kept in prison, as we dare not ride beyond our posts towards the country. 3d, if any attack is made, either by sea or land, we wish more than we are likely to gain. 4th, if certain events take place, which are not improbable, we shall be inevitably starved. 5th, we have tried the Congress, and you will think with me that, in our present circumstances, they will not depart from their resolution in refusing our offers; consequently we have every reason in the world to despair of being of the least use here. 6th, our packet is taken, which would perhaps have relieved me from a state of suspense, that I have not public virtue enough not to think more

On the 26th of August, Johnstone published a counter manifesto.

New York, August 26th, 1778.

George Johnstone, one of the Commissioners appointed by his Majesty to carry into execution the gracious purposes of his Majesty and his Parliament for quieting the disorders now subsisting in North America, and for maintaining the people of these provinces in the clear and perfect enjoyment of their liberties and rights, having seen a declaration of the American Congress, signed by Henry Laurens, their President, dated 11th of August, to which, for certain assumed reasons therein specified, is subjoined the following resolution:—

"That it is incompatible with the honour of Congress to hold any manner of correspondence or intercourse with the said George Johnstone, Esq., especially to negotiate with him upon affairs in which the cause of liberty is interested."

The said George Johnstone for himself says, that he is far from considering the said resolution of the Congress as offensive to him: that he rather receives it as a mark of distinction to which he is by no means entitled, either by his exertions in the cause in which he is employed, or by his abilities for improving any future circumstances that may occur towards fulfilling the purposes of the commission under which he is appointed.

bitter than many of those misfortunes which my country must feel as well as myself. I shall not pass for a patriot, perhaps, with him who reads this letter before it reaches you. I have done more to save my country—I would still go greater lengths than many who sit quietly at home, and profess their zeal for its welfare; but you, who know the wife and children I have left, would not have believed me if I had not told you the plain truth.

What measures we shall adopt about the time of returning, I cannot as yet determine. I own fairly, we have nothing to do here, but we must not quit the business till that point is so clear as not to admit of two opinions. A little time will fling a great deal of light upon this subject, and in case nothing unforeseen happens, we shall certainly be at liberty to act as we think proper. Whenever we come, we shall have to run the gauntlet, and have good luck if we do not visit France or Spain. If there is any constraint in this letter, you must impute it to the cause I gave in setting out. I am, dear George,

Yours, most affectionately, &c.

CARLISLE.

To George Selwyn, Esq.,
Care of Sir John Lambert, Banker, at Paris.

Coincidently with Governor Johnstone's card of the 25th of August, the other commissioners had disavowed formally all knowledge of his private correspondence, without however admitting the justice of the construction put upon it by Congress.

That he shall be happy to find when this exception as to him shall be removed, that the Congress are inclined to retract their former declaration, and to negotiate with others upon terms equally conducive to the happiness of both countries. At the same time, he is inclined to believe that the said resolution of Congress has been issued on similar motives with those resolutions respecting the cartouch boxes of General Burgoyne's army, and calculated as an excuse to a deluded people for not sending an explicit answer to a plain requisition that was made to the Congress from his Majesty's commissioners, with regard to the unfortunate soldiers who are detained at Boston, under every indignity, contrary to the public faith of a solemn convention, signed at Saratoga; and also to serve as a pretext to the unhappy constituents of Congress, who are suffering under the various calamities of war, for disappointing the good effects of the commission, which the real friends of America had so long requested by the most solemn petitions, resolutions, and public declarations, and which so many of the inhabitants of this continent now desire to see carried into full effect.

As the great purpose Mr. Johnstone had in view in coming to North America was to promote a reconciliation between Great Britain and her Colonies, with a full determination to do nothing that could have a tendency to prevent it. In order, therefore, to defeat the purposes intended by this Resolution of Congress, the subscriber, George Johnstone, thinks proper to decline acting as a Commissioner, or otherwise interfering in any message, answer, agreement, negotiation, matter or thing that may regard the said Congress; which he does with so much the more pleasure, as he is perfectly satisfied the business will be left in more able and sufficient hands; reserving to himself the liberty, if he should judge proper, of publishing, before he leaves North America, a justification of his conduct against the aspersions thrown on his character.

When the Congress were contending for essential privileges, necessary to the preservation of their liberty, under solemn declarations that their resistance was calculated merely to obtain redress upon those points, Mr. Johnstone should have been sorry to have incurred their censure, though unheard in his defence, and upon a chain of evidence so totally inconclusive as to him.

At present, when the Congress can remain deaf to the cries of so many of their fellow-subjects who are suffering by the miseries of this war, and from motives of private ambition can so far sully the principles upon which their first resistance was made, as to bow to a French Ambassador, and league with the ancient enemy of both our countries, from whose hostile designs Great Britain has so often rescued the inhabitants of North America, and this for the avowed purpose of reducing the power of the parent state, after all their just claims are gratified, and thereby injuring their nearest and dearest friends and relations, forgetting all the principles of virtue and liberty that ought to regulate the conduct of men in society, Mr. Johnstone is not anxious about the good opinion of such a body, notwithstanding the

regard he shall always bear to many of the individuals who compose it, from a just allowance to be made for men acting under the heats incident to civil commotions, and from a certain knowledge they did entertain, and a persuasion that they now entertain different sentiments.

With respect to the people of America at large, the subscriber wishes to avoid every subject of offence which designing men may possibly intend to create, by exciting angry passions in return to personal provocations, and thereby defeat any effects of good will towards Mr. Johnstone, which the remembrance of former good offices he has rendered them might occasion.

GEORGE JOHNSTONE.

It is very remarkable, that in this insolent and offensive performance Governor Johnstone never ventured to deny the charge which the Resolutions of Congress preferred, but palpably evaded it by a series of declamatory professions and complaints. In the beginning of October he sailed for England, giving as his reason his anxiety to be present at the opening of Parliament, and to vote against further concessions to America; and it was not till after his departure that an experiment at direct denial was made in the form of a letter to Dr. Ferguson, published in Rivington's Gazette of October 8th, 1778. It is as follows :

New York, 28 September, 1778.

Having received the following letter from Governor Johnstone at his departure for England, I think it my duty to fulfil his intention, by publishing it for the satisfaction of those who may desire to know the reasons that have induced him to suspend any particular discussion of the charge, on which a late Resolution of the Congress respecting himself is founded. The intimation contained in this letter will, in the mind of every person in any degree acquainted with his character, have its proper effects; although I am, both by his injunctions and by the considerations he mentions, restrained at present from giving any particular account of the evidence entrusted to me.

ADAM FERGUSON.

New York, 22 September, 1778.

DEAR SIR,

I leave in your possession, complete, indisputable evidence, that no act of mine, by word, writing, message, or conversation with any person whatsoever, could have been conceived by the Member of Congress, Joseph

Reed, Esq., previous to the 19th of July last, as an attempt or as having a tendency, in any manner whatsoever, to corrupt his integrity.

A regard to the faith of private communications, and an attention to the peace and safety of innocent individuals, under the horrid cruelties that are daily exercised to maintain the present system of government, by the Congress and committees, restrain me from making this and other evidence public. But when the time shall arrive that may render such communications proper, I am persuaded the world will applaud my self-denial, in refusing myself the satisfaction of publishing so complete a refutation of the aspersions attempted to be thrown on my character by the Resolutions of the Congress, founded on a species of testimony that could not affect me, upon any rule of evidence, or any fair construction of language.

Another matter I wish the world to know is, that I do not return to England on account of that proceeding of Congress. The other Commissioners as well as you, and all persons with whom I have lived with any degree of intimacy here, and all my correspondents in England, are sufficiently acquainted that I had determined to return to England by the meeting of Parliament, to give my voice and opinion against yielding to the claim of independency, long before any such resolves of the Congress had passed.

I am, with esteem and affection, your sincere friend,
GEORGE JOHNSTONE.

The other Commissioners remained in this country till November; when after several attempts in the form of manifestoes to divert public feeling, and to appeal from the adverse decision of Congress, they, with the exception of Sir Henry Clinton left in command of the British forces, returned home. On the 23d of October, Lord Carlisle thus described the closing act of this abortive mission.

THE EARL OF CARLISLE TO SELWYN.

I enclose you our manifesto which you will never read. I have made a mark under one part of it that may be interesting to you. 'Tis a sort of last dying speech of the Commission; an effort from which I expect little success; an experiment and duty to our country and ourselves, from which, however, in our circumstances, I fear will originate little public advantage. . . . Everything is upon a great scale upon this continent. The rivers are immense, the climate violent in heat and cold; the prospects magnificent, the thunder and lightning tremendous. The disorders incident to the country, make every constitution tremble. We have nothing on a great scale with us but our blunders, our misconduct, our ruin, our losses, our disgraces and misfortunes that will mark the reign of a prince,

who deserves better treatment and kinder fortunes. Whatever may be our reception at home I think I have strength of mind enough to stem the torrent, let it set against me with all its fury. I have served my King with zeal and attachment for his government and person. If I had succeeded my country would have reaped the benefit of my labours; as I have not, I only hope the approbation of the attempt will not be refused me.*

Thus ended the last attempt at conciliation made during the continuance of the War. Its history fully justifies the remark that has been made on the kindred blundering of the civil and military operations of the Revolution. Its details have been no further referred to than as they illustrate the subject of the memoir.

On the 26th of November, Governor Johnstone in the course of the debate in the House of Commons on the Address, took occasion to make an elaborate defence of his conduct, and that of his colleagues of the Commission. Among other things he said :

"The accusation stated against me with respect to General Joseph Reed, as far as the transaction pretends having any authority from me to make the offer, is false and injurious; it is indeed very cautiously worded, and only implies being done by my authority. This I deny, and I have perfect proof in my possession, that Mr. Reed never understood any message or writing of mine as liable to that construction. While I say this, I do not mean to disavow I have had transactions, where other means besides persuasion have been used. It was necessary; in my situation it can be no reproach. This of Mr. Reed I deny, and I can prove by indisputable evidence in my possession, that Mr. Reed never understood any message from me in that light at the time nor long subsequent. The conversation is said to have passed on the 21st of June. The mutilated letters, that are to help out this lame transaction, were before Congress. The matter had been published in newspapers at that time, but not signed by Mr. Reed nor William Henry Drayton. The Congress took no notice of the business till the 11th of August; then the indignation of that virtuous Assembly rises. At the very moment they are about to evade a solemn engagement, and transmit their names with infamy to future ages, they have the assurance to talk of liberty and virtue.

" You sir, are well acquainted with the forms of public proceedings; you know, that any declaration of Mr. Reed, of what a woman unknown had said to him, cannot affect me. The Congress in this case were bound to

* *Letter to Selwyn*, iii. p. 339.

have obliged Mr. Reed to have named the Lady, and next to have brought that Lady before them, to have heard her own story, with time, place, and circumstance: this should have been sent for my answer, and then they might have pronounced their solemn judgment. But they knew full well, that no lady whatsoever could avow any authority from me, and therefore they wisely concealed her name."

What the perfect proof in Johnstone's possession was, he never ventured to indicate, and was never very distinctly surmised. This was probably one of the rash and unscrupulous declarations, with which the whole speech abounded; such for example, as that he found on his arrival in Pennsylvania, ten thousand men ready in that province, and as many more in the Lower Counties, to rally round the royal standard, had they received due encouragement. The denial, thus recklessly made, was no sooner received in America, than Mrs. Ferguson, Johnstone's confidential agent, anxious to do full justice to all parties, of her own accord, published a full narrative of the transaction verified by oath, in which she reiterated the allegations which had been thus recklessly denied. It is from this narrative, that extracts have been made above. One further extract may be not inappropriately added from this candid and unpretending statement.

"Among the many mortifying insinuations that have been hinted on the subject, none has so sensibly affected me, as an intimation that some thought I acted apart, in consequence of certain expectations of a post, or some preferment from Mr. Johnstone, to be conferred on the person dearest to me on earth. On that head, I shall say no more, but to leave it to any person of common sense to determine, if I had any views of that kind, whether I should, in so full and solemn a manner, call in question what Mr. Johnstone has asserted in the House of Commons. A proceeding of this kind must totally exclude all avenues of favour from that quarter, were there ever any expected, which I solemnly declare never was the case. If this account should ever have the honour to be glanced over by the eye of Governor Johnstone, I know not in what medium he may view it. It is possible that the multiplicity of ideas, which may be supposed to pass through the brain of a politician in the course of a few months, may have jostled the whole transaction out of his memory. Should this be the case, insignificant and contemptible as I may appear to him, I believe there are two or three people in Britain that will venture to tell him, in all his plenitude of power, that they believe I would not set my hand to an untruth."

All the facts connected with this transaction were collected in a pamphlet, and published by Mr. Reed in the early part of 1779, under the title of "Remarks on Governor Johnstone's Speech in Parliament, with a collection of all the letters and authentic papers, &c.", Philadelphia, 1779. Mrs. Ferguson's narrative appeared in the newspapers of the day. The following letter, written two years later, relates generally to the same affair.

DR. FRANKLIN TO MR. REED.

Passy, March 19th, 1780.

SIR,

I have just received the pamphlet you did me the honour to send me by Monsieur Gerard, and have read it with pleasure, not only as the clear state of facts do you honour, but as they prove the falsehood of a man, who also showed no regard to truth in what he said of me, viz., that I approved of the proposition he carried over.* The truth is that his brother, Mr. Pultney, came here with those propositions, and communicated them to me; after stipulating that, if I did not approve of them, I should not speak of them to any person. I told him frankly, on his desiring to know my sentiments, that *I did not approve of them, and that I was sure they would not be accepted in America.* "But," said I, "there are two other commissioners here; I will, if you please, show your propositions to them, and you will hear their opinion. I will also show them to the ministry here, without whose knowledge and concurrence we can take no step in such affairs." "No," says he; "as you do not approve of them, it can answer no purpose to show them to any body else; the reasons that weigh with you will also weigh with them: therefore I now pray that no mention may be made of my having been here, or my business." To this I agreed, and therefore nothing could be more astonishing to me, than to see in an American newspaper that direct lie in a letter from Mr. Johnstone, joined with two other falsehoods, relating to the time of the treaty, and to the opinion of Spain. In proof of the above, I inclose a certificate of a friend of Mr. Pultney's, the only person present at our interview; and do it the rather at this time, because I am informed that another calumniator (the same who formerly, in his private letters to particular members, accused you, with Messrs. Jay, Duane, Langdon, and Harrison, of betraying the secrets of Congress, in a

* Governor Johnstone, in a letter to Mr. Dana, had said that Dr. Franklin was perfectly satisfied that the propositions of the Commissioners were beneficial to America, and such as she should accept.—*Almon's Remembrancer*, vol. vii. p. 8, 18.

correspondence with the Ministry) has made this transaction with Mr. Pultney an article of accusation against me, as having approved those propositions. He proposes, I understand, to settle in your Government. I caution you to beware of him; for in sowing suspicions and jealousies, in creating misunderstandings and quarrels among friends, in malice, subtlety, and indefatigable industry, he has, I think, no equal.*

I am glad to see that you continue to preside in our new State, as it shows that your public conduct is approved by the people. You have had a difficult time, which required abundance of prudence; and you have been equal

* The allusion here is to Arthur Lee. (See *Sparks's Franklin*, vol. viii. p. 444.) Mr. Lee, whose patriotism no one can question, seems at this period to have been infected with a morbid suspicion of many of his countrymen, and especially of his fellow-commissioners abroad. At the time referred to in Dr. Franklin's letters, Mr. Lee's suspicions and insinuations, wrapped in all the mystery of cipher correspondence, it would seem, were often unintelligible to his correspondents. On the 3d June, 1776, Lee had disparaged Mr. Reed in a letter to the Secret Committee, the effect of which, Mr. Reed thus describes in a letter to his wife, dated Philadelphia, August 15th, 1778. "About eight days ago, the Committee of Arrangement was ordered to proceed to camp. At that time I was confined, and immediately afterward the business of Congress led to inquiry into the conduct of our commissioner abroad, when mutual recrimination brought out the charge made by Dr. Lee against Mr. Langdon and myself, as holding a treacherous correspondence with the British Ministry. It seems Doctor Lee transmitted it to Paris, to be forwarded to America, somehow concealed in the blank leaves of Entick's Dictionary. The gentlemen at Paris, on examining it, fearing it would have fatal effects on our characters, kept it back. After a little time, Mr. Lee having joined them as a fellow-commissioner, and soon falling out with them, he endeavoured to get the dictionary from them, which was refused; and last spring it was sent over to Mr. R. Morris, who seeing only a dictionary, and no explanation, could not tell what to make of it, but laid it by, and it being at Manheim, (Mr. Morris's country seat,) we have not yet seen the contents. The story having now taken wind, and a strong party formed against the Lee connexion, they are resolved to avail themselves of this indiscreet and imprudent measure, to turn him out of employ if they can, or at least that it shall be a make-weight in the scale. For my own part, my opinion of Dr. Lee is not altered by the transaction. I shall vote just in the same manner, as I should have done, if another person had been the object of this charge, and am really sorry that the talent he unquestionably possesses, should be useless to himself and dangerous to others, for want of a little portion of candour, and common, ordinary sense to mingle with them; and, at all events, we ought to be thankful that while rocks and precipices were all around me, Providence so ordered matters, that I have not only not fallen, but possess a greater share of public confidence than I ever did."—(MS. Letter.) *Force's American Archives*, vol. vi. p. 686. In the latter part of the contest, he became one of Mr. Reed's warmest friends.

to the occasion. The disputes about the Constitution seem to have subsided. It is much admired here and all over Europe, and will draw over many families of fortune to settle under it as soon as there is a peace. The defects that may on seven years' trial be found in it, can be amended when the time comes for considering them. With great and sincere esteem and respect, I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's most obedient and humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

I do hereby certify whom it may concern, that I was present with Mr. Pultney and Dr. Franklin at Paris, when in a conversation between them, on the subject of certain propositions for a reconciliation with America, offered by Mr. Pultney, Dr. Franklin said he did not approve of them, nor did he think they would be approved in America, but that he would communicate them to his colleagues and the French Ministry; this Mr. Pultney opposed, saying that it would answer no good end, as he was persuaded that what weighed with Dr. Franklin would weigh also with them; and therefore desired that no mention might be made of his having offered such propositions or even of his having been here on such business, but that the whole might be buried in oblivion, agreeable to what had been stipulated by Mr. Pultney and agreed to by Dr. Franklin, before the propositions were produced, which Dr. Franklin accordingly promised.

W. ALEXANDER.*

Paris, March 19th, 1780.

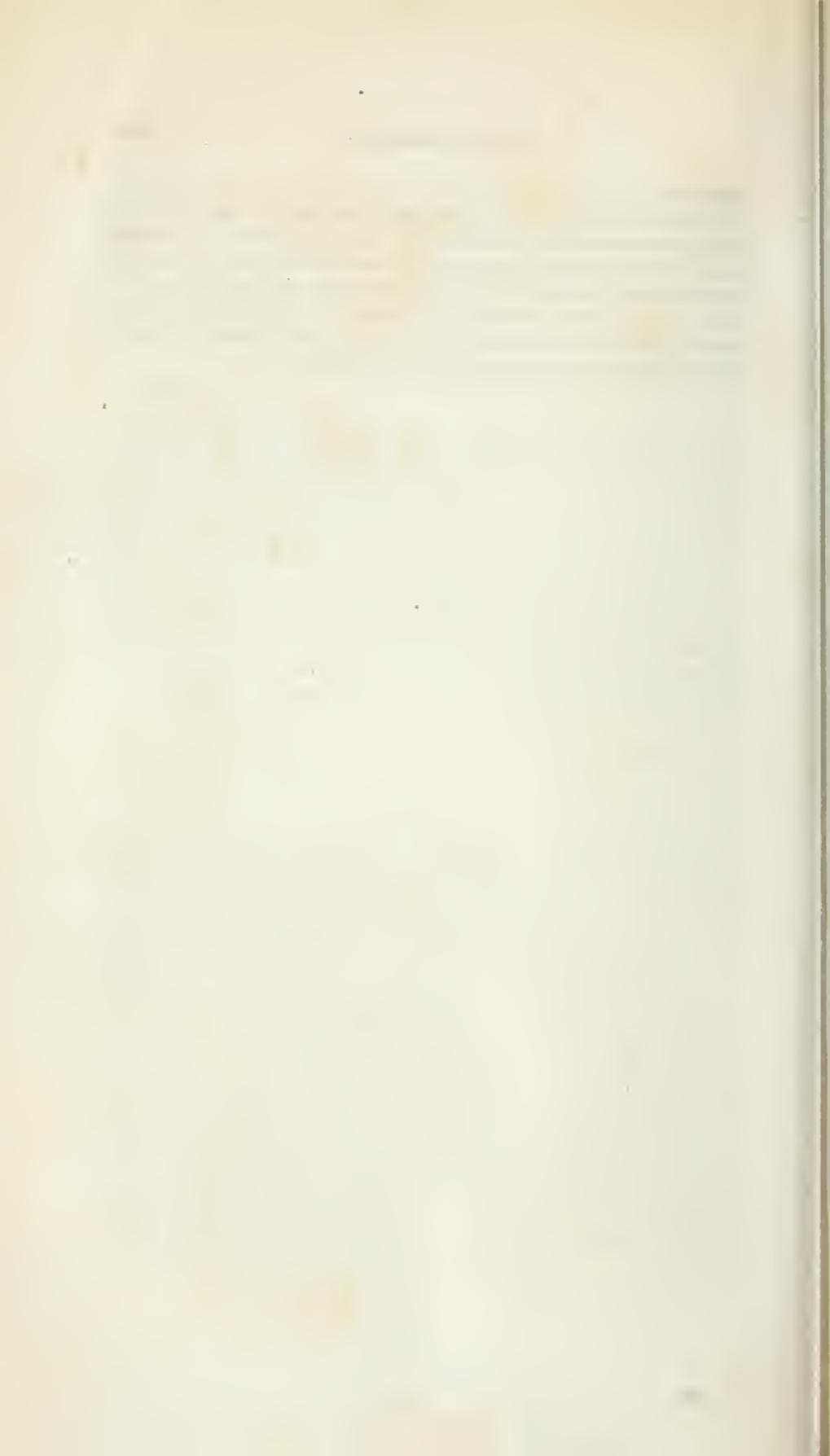
* William Alexander was a native of Scotland, and a merchant of high character, first in Edinburgh, and afterwards in London. Being largely interested in the American trade, he became involved in the commercial embarrassments which the measures of Government occasioned, and removed with his family to France, residing occasionally at Paris, and Dijon. In England he became intimately acquainted with Franklin, and the original and well-known picture, by Martin (now in the possession of Henry J. Williams, Esq., of Philadelphia) was painted for him. Mr. Alexander was evidently very well disposed to the American cause, and seems to have had some agency in the preliminary negotiations for peace.—(*Diplomatic Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 256, 37.) His eldest son was Sir William Alexander, for many years, Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer. In September, 1779, Mr. Alexander's daughter was married to Jonathan Williams, a relative of Dr. Franklin, and, for many years, United States Commercial Agent at Nantes. Colonel Williams was afterwards a distinguished officer of American Engineers, and the first Superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point. He is one whom the author of this Memoir gratefully recollects in the latter years of an honoured and most distinguished life.

Mr. Alexander, in the year 1800, came to the United States, and resided, till his death, about the year 1819, in Kentucky.

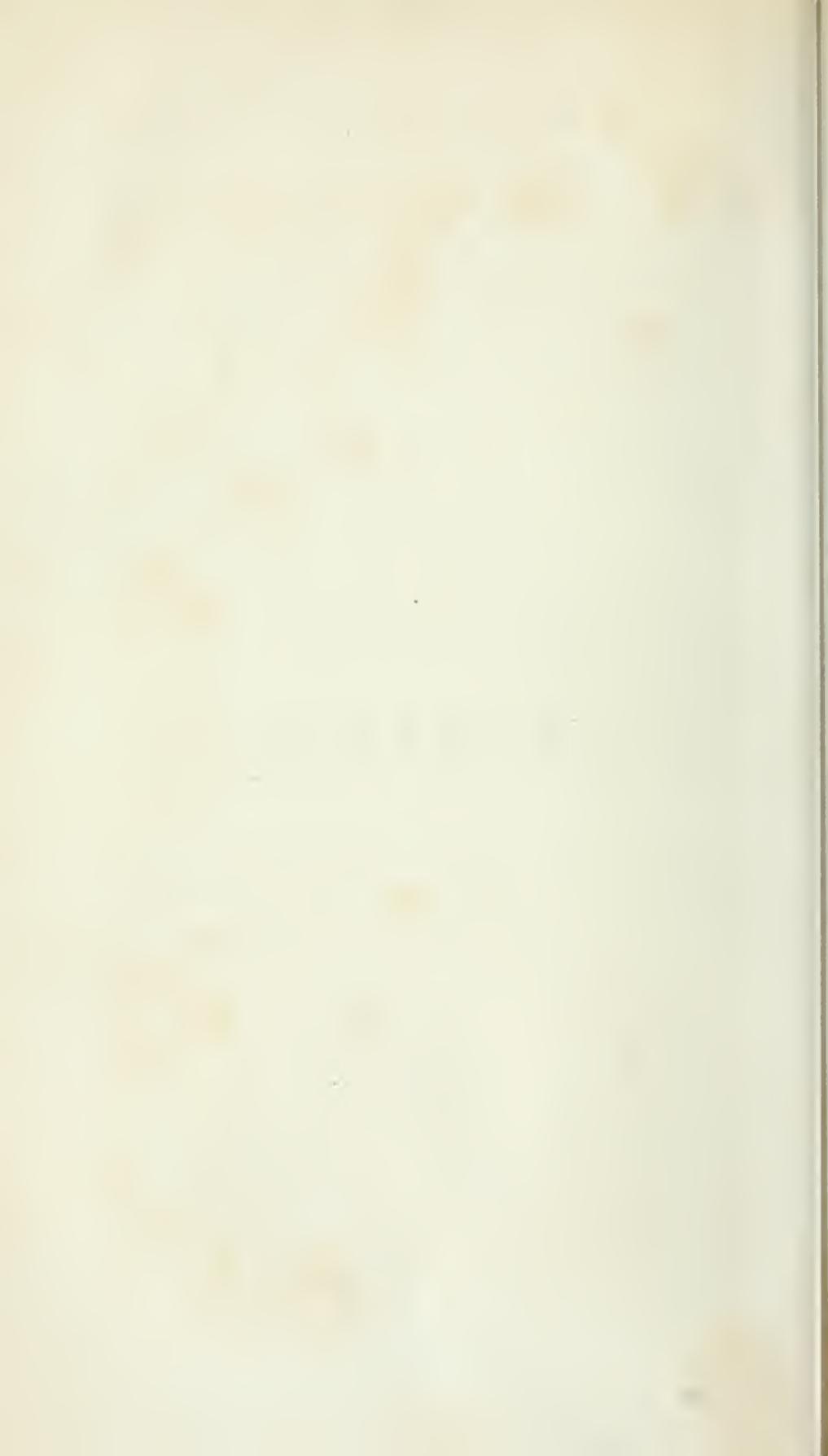
DEAR SIR,

I send you, adjoined, the certificate you desire—and am perfectly convinced, from conversations I have since had with Mr. Pultney, that nobody was authorized to hold the language which has been imputed to him on that subject; and as I have a high opinion of his candour and worth, I know it must be painful to him to be brought into question in matters of fact with persons he esteems, I could wish that this matter may receive no further publicity than what is necessary for your justification.

W. A.



A P P E N D I X.



APPENDIX.

No. I.—Page 40.

MR. REED'S ESSAY ON THE RECIPROCAL ADVANTAGES OF A PERPETUAL UNION
BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND HER AMERICAN COLONIES, WRITTEN FOR
MR. SARGENT'S PRIZE MEDAL, MAY 20TH, 1766.

(This Essay, written by a young man, and, as he states, in the midst of urgent professional avocations, is here republished, as a curious developement of the popular notions of the day as to the commercial destinies of this country, and the prevalent hope for an amicable adjustment of the difficulties with Great Britain. It was written in a brief interval of sunshine during the Rockingham Administration. In 1784, Mr. Reed, then in London, prepared an Essay on the advantages of commercial union between Great Britain and the Independent United States, which is very curious, and will be found in the second volume. To the Essay of 1766, I have added a few notes, illustrative of prophecy and reality.)

Divide et impera.

HOWEVER mankind, as individuals, may be swayed by the different motives of passion, prejudice, and honour; yet, when formed into states and communities, these all subside; and interest becomes the grand prevailing principle that actuates all their motions. It is the Pole-star by which the political pilot must ever guide the helm of government, where too keen a pursuit of it does not interfere with the faith of treaties, or the natural rights of mankind. An accurate discernment, therefore, of the true interest of a nation, and a steady active prudence in the pursuit of it, constitute the true political wisdom that ought to distinguish every statesman. And so sensible are ministers of every complexion of the truth of this doctrine, that however selfish and pernicious their views, they seldom fail to cover them over with the plausible and specious colouring of national advantage.

The establishing a grand commercial interest seems now to be the great object of the regard and attention of the different states of Europe. To this they are every day sacrificing the less important considerations of national pride and prejudice. Whatever, therefore, tends to promote or obstruct this great principle of government, is now become a matter of serious consequence, which deserves the closest attention and the tenderest care. And amidst the rivalship and contention of the several European powers in

attaining this capital point, happy will that nation be, whose administration shall lead to such measures as are most conducive to this end, as a superiority may now be gained that may blast the hopes, and at once dash the expectations of its aspiring competitors.

If there is any one, who at present bids fairest for this pre-eminence, it is Great Britain, whose free and happy constitution most admirably protects and cherishes an enterprising commercial spirit. A security of person and property is essentially necessary to the very being of a commercial nation, and in this respect none of its rivals can claim superiority to the happy subjects of Britain, whose wise and valiant ancestors have handed down to them this glorious security, sealed with their blood. But not even this, nor her natural situation, so well adapted for safety from her enemies, and the advancement of her trade, nor yet the active genius and temper of her children, may be sufficient to insure her success, if her colonies are neglected or oppressed. If properly attended to, they will prove the true sources of her wealth and power, and enable her to soar above her emulating neighbours, who will view her rapid progress with envy and admiration. To enumerate the many mutual advantages they have already received from their close and intimate connexion would be no easy task—but it would require little less than inspiration, to foresee all the reciprocal advantages that will attend a future union between them formed upon proper, upon generous principles.

To point out those that are most obvious, and which must necessarily follow, is the design of this Essay, which pretends to no more than sketching out the imperfect outlines of a picture, whose beauty has indeed been shaded: but we trust and believe that time and experience will point out those blemishes, and soon restore it to its former purity and lustre. To facilitate this has been the design of the generous friend to this institution, who proposed the discussion of the present subject: and it is a design worthy the benevolent patriotic spirit of an English senator.

Rome, the mistress of the world, and arbiter of nations, by her wise policy, and prudent conduct to her allies and colonists, raised herself to an astonishing pitch of grandeur and power; she encouraged, she incorporated, and never deprived them of any essential privileges. By these rules she gained their affections, and of factious, turbulent citizens, and often inveterate enemies she made faithful, zealous, and useful subjects. Great Britain has, at much expense of blood and treasure, secured and protected her American colonies from the designs of France, who viewed their rising power and growing importance with a jealous eye, and therefore determined to nip them in the bud, before they could ripen to any degree of formidable perfection. Happily for us these ambitious and fatal projects were crushed by the united valour and skill of Great Britain and her provinces. To a happy and successful union in war, let us then add the happy and harmonious union of peace, nor lose its blessings by inattention to, or disregard of, the inestimable advantages that may, nay that must attend it.

Colonies are emigrations from the Mother Country, either occasioned by a quick population, so as to render it too small for the support of its growing inhabitants; or by oppression, tyranny, and undue exercise of power; or sometimes by the distresses and desolation of war.

In the first case, they are always formed not only with the countenance, but with the express encouragement and direction of the Mother Country. In the second instance, unless prohibited by legal authority, they generally go with its implied consent. In the last, which was the case of the Trojans after the destruction of Troy, they go under a necessity which is superior to all law. In either of these cases, then, but especially the two first, they cannot be supposed to relinquish their claim to any of the rights and privileges of the country from which they go, nor yet to have forfeited it. No; however remote, they still continue subjects of the same kingdom, and unless specially relinquished, entitled to all the liberties, privileges, and immunities of that country, of which they form one or more of the constituent parts. If this be as true in fact as it is grateful in supposition, the analogy made by an eminent writer* between the American colonies and those of Spain, which he supposes to be settled upon the same principles, and therefore to be governed by the same policy, must appear very strange. But the principle upon which it is founded, is as erroneous as the consequence deduced from it is derogatory to English liberty.

The American colonies have been entirely settled by those who came under the immediate protection and countenance of the government, or fled to it as an asylum from arbitrary and oppressive power. A due consideration of the rights they claim, and the duties they owe to the Mother Country, may be necessary, in some degree, to ascertain with precision the advantages that will accrue from a complete and perfect union. These rights and duties are reciprocal, as well as the interest which arises from them.

The rights we claim are the full and free enjoyment of constitutional liberty, protection from foreign invasions, and encouragement in every commercial interest, which does not directly interfere with that of the Mother Country.

The duties we owe, are obedience under constitutional and legal restrictions, and an exclusive preference to the Mother Country in every article of commerce and trade. Under one or other of these heads, however widely diffused, may be comprised every duty, either owing to or from the Mother Country. And it is by a due and mutual observance of these only, that their respective and reciprocal interests can be promoted. From this just and wise policy will flow all those advantages which render a close and perfect union so desirable an object; and these may be considered either as they tend to increase the power and glory of Great Britain, or as they advance its grand commercial interest, and become the channels of its wealth. Or

* Dr. Strahan's Preface to Domat's Civil Law.

with regard to the Colonies, as they conduce to their safety, nourishment, and protection; for though the true riches of a nation are said to consist in the number of its inhabitants, and treasures are called the sinews of war, it is very certain a nation may be very poor, and very powerful at the same time; or abound with wealth, and yet be weak and impotent. Rome, in its early ages, was poor in everything but the public spirit and bravery of her people, while she was the dread and terror of the nations round her. And Spain is at present a lively instance that wealth and power are not inseparable; who, as the treasures of the Indies have flowed in upon her, has lost the martial animated spirit of her ancestors.

As subjects of the same kingdom, bearing allegiance to the same prince, and controlled by the same executive power, the Americans are bound to contribute, in proportion to their numbers and abilities, to the defence and safety of the common cause. What an accession of power to the British empire then is three millions of subjects, dutiful, loyal and brave, who have on many occasions distinguished themselves, and shown they were not unworthy the glorious stock from which they sprung; who interest themselves in the honour and glory of the nation, and partake of the veneration and respect due to it?*

Here is a fund of hardy, brave soldiers, inured to fatigue and frugality, ready to engage in the service of Great Britain, whenever she thinks proper to require them. From this fruitful, this increasing source, her armies and navies may receive constant supplies, not of mercenary hirelings, ready to engage in the service of the highest bidder, but faithful, dutiful children, animated with becoming fortitude, freedom and loyalty. These, if encouraged, cherished, and protected, will indeed prove

"Of Britain's empire the support and strength."—THOMPSON.

In order to make a colony of the most use and benefit to the Mother Country, it is necessary that its climate, its soil, and natural produce, should be essentially different from hers. This will create a necessary connexion and dependence between them. The interchanging the commodities and produce of the one, for those of the other, will not only destroy the heart-burnings and jealousy of a competition, but produce an intercourse equally beneficial and durable to both. It is happy, therefore, when the subjects of commerce cannot be the same, as they thereby reap an advantage, from which other nations are excluded, who might either by withholding distress them, or raise the balance against them when their necessities were not mutual and equal. In this respect, Great Britain is peculiarly happy in her Colonies, whose wide extent and different situations include a variety of

* In 1845 an English traveller thus describes the present and the future of the Anglo-American population. In 1840 it was seventeen millions. In 1850 it will be twenty-two millions. In 1860, twenty-nine millions. In 1880, fifty millions, and in 1900, eighty millions.—*Lyell's Travels in America*, vol. ii. p. 66.

climates, soils, and produce, and thus form a proper basis for the commercial interest, to which every other consideration should submit. The islands produce commodities which the Mother Country must use, and yet cannot raise; these, therefore, she must procure by an intercourse with her colonies, or lie at the mercy of those powers whose interest it might occasionally be to distress her. But what adds to the advantage is, that the subjects of commerce are not only easily procured, but procured by a mutual exchange, equally convenient and satisfactory to both; and, at the same time, a large revenue secured, not only upon the home consumption, but on the surplus beyond their respective wants and necessities. Thus also, as to the continent, Great Britain, both as a naval and commercial nation, would be in a critical, dangerous situation, if she did not hold within her own reach, all the materials necessary for the support of both. An entire dependence upon any of her neighbours for one necessary article would, in some degree, make her subject to that neighbour. But her colonies set her above every apprehension of this kind. Her northern provinces abound with timber of every kind, necessary for building and equipping her navies. Immense bodies of ore, both iron and copper, are already discovered and usefully employed; and, doubtless, much more lies still concealed in the bowels of the earth, whose soil, if properly cultivated and encouraged, is richly productive of hemp and flax; for the former of which Great Britain pays, *communibus annis*, £300,000 sterling. Her more southern colonies furnish her with the few remaining marine articles of pitch, tar, and turpentine.*

Here, then, are found all the materials of timber, iron, cordage, and every other species of naval stores, necessary for the support, nay, the existence of Great Britain as a maritime power. Should I here mention bodies of salt-petre, the spontaneous produce of the earth, I may perhaps be thought too premature; but if the promising appearances of that useful and expensive, but necessary commodity, be happily confirmed, here is a new source of national wealth and independence. A large and constant balance, which Great Britain pays to the Indies in specie, will be instantly saved, and a surer, quicker, and cheaper supply at once secured. Next to the subjects of commerce, which are necessary to enable the Mother Country to maintain her independence and rank among the other powers of Europe, we may place all these, which are articles of convenience, luxury, and the surplus of those commodities which are not applied to naval purposes. The real and absolute necessities of life are but few, the subjects of commerce are many and various, as they contribute not only to the real, but the imagi-

* In 1833 there was exported from St. Petersburg in British bottoms, 167,936 tons of hemp, worth as an average, without charges, £4,000,000 sterling. In 1845 America exported \$690,000 worth of naval stores to Great Britain alone, and one state (Kentucky) raised in 1840, 10,000 tons of hemp and flax, worth at least one million of dollars. Who dreamed of Kentucky in 1766?

nary, capricious wants of mankind. To provide, therefore, against these wants, upon advantageous terms, is a just and necessary policy; and there are few, very few of these articles, which the colonists cannot furnish, under proper encouragements. The islands tender the various produce of their climate equal in quantity and quality with those of their neighbours. The southern colonies of North America have, as far as the infancy of the country will permit, produced the different articles of silk, rice, indigo, tobacco, and even the tea plant has not been altogether uncultivated.* Some of these have been carried to a much greater degree of cultivation than others; but where it has, Great Britain has received a proportionate benefit. In the instance of tobacco only, she has become not only the sole vender, but almost the sole manufacturer for Europe, besides the immense revenue flowing immediately into her exchequer.†

Wines are an article of luxury, and it is, perhaps, upon that account they have not been so much attended to by the frugal, temperate American; but it is certain, not only from theory, but experience, that the situation and soil of many parts of this extended continent, are well adapted for producing them. To what degree of perfection not only the cultivation of these, but the other articles of convenience and luxury may arrive, is difficult to determine; but it is easy to see that the great, the eventual profit, will terminate in Great Britain. I mentioned before the produce of the Colonies as naval stores, but considered as the raw materials of great and extensive manufactories, which give bread to thousands; and of idle, clamorous, starving subjects, make useful and industrious citizens, I cannot err when I say they are immensely useful to their Mother Country. Upon a view of the

* One greater article of commerce than all these was not then dreamed of. What a wild phantasy would it have been in 1766 to have foretold that, far within a century, Great Britain would pay to America £7,000,000 sterling for a product then not thought of. The total export of cotton from the United States, in 1846, was \$51,700,000, or £10,340,000 sterling. There is in the Chatham Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 420, a very remarkable letter from Mr. Pitt, dated May 11, 1766, on the subject of encouraging the cotton growth. "Nothing," said he, "is so demonstrated, as that our British possessions will, with proper regulations, supply all the cotton wanted, and our sugar colonies be saved from being sacrificed to a speculative object." Dr. Franklin, in his Examination before the House of Commons in February, 1766, (*Sparks's Franklin*, iv. 176,) spoke of the Americans clothing themselves with cotton of their own raising. This testimony to the fact of cotton being raised thus early in North America, seems to have been entirely lost sight of in the Report on the subject made by the Secretary of the Treasury in 1836.—*Woodbury's Report*, pp. 24, 51, 108, 111.

† Assuming this to refer to the colonies now forming the United States, for Canada was but recently "annexed," the contrast is very striking. In 1846 the imports and exports from the United States to Great Britain was nineteen millions sterling.

foreign trade of Great Britain, we shall find, that except that to Portugal, the balance is against her in every one. To Russia, to Sweden, to Denmark, to Germany, she pays annually large sums in specie, for those very commodities which her American colonies can and do produce; and a great writer has observed, "That a country which constantly exports fewer manufactures or commodities than it receives, will soon find the balance sinking, will receive less and less, till falling into extreme poverty, it will receive nothing at all."

Here, then, we may trace the great utility of the Colonies, not only that they afford a constant and sure supply of the subjects of commerce, necessary for the support of the power and manufactures of the Mother Country, but in that she has an indisputable exclusive preference in the sale of them; and the Colonies, in return, are the fixed and constant customers for all her manufactures and commodities, to which they are indispensably obliged to give the preference over those of other countries: for as the design of colonizing was not to found a new empire, but to extend the old, there is no impropriety in appropriating the trade of the Colonies to the Mother Country only. If the balance was, therefore, in favour of Colonies, as is the case between Great Britain and the East Indies, it would be more eligible it should fall into the hands of its own subjects, however remote, than into those of a foreign power. But where that balance is actually and greatly in favour of the Mother Country, it becomes an interest that ought to be very dear; to the cultivating of which, the greatest care and attention of government should be applied. That this is the case of Great Britain and her continental colonies, the vast exportation of bullion, and the still remaining debt of five millions, most evidently evince. With what a rapid, astonishing progress, this beneficial, this lucrative trade has advanced, the growing increase of the exports declare, which arose from the year 1741, from £1,436,227, to the amazing amount of £2,710,520. To this the Mother Country, in a great measure, owes her continuance as a trading nation, when deprived of her valuable Levant trade, and her intercourse even with Portugal greatly diminished, and lessened by her active, industrious rivals, the French and Dutch. It is from this fountain those treasures flow, which enable her to pay the respective balances to those countries, with whom she trades on a disadvantageous footing. America, it is true, does not extract them immediately from her own bowels. She has a more valuable and durable resource, in the labour and industry of her inhabitants; who exchange the surplus of their commodities, beyond their own consumption, (and which might, in some respects, interfere with the staples of the Mother Country, or at least be useless to her) for those treasures which are only valuable to the colonists, as they enable them to discharge past, and contract future engagements for the manufactures of Great Britain.

While, therefore, she possesses a market, which she can call exclusively her own, subject to her own regulations, and the balance always in her favour; whatever the Colonies may acquire from any collateral branches of

trade, will quickly flow to the Mother Country, as the great centre of all their external profits. To restrain, therefore, or rather stop up those channels of remittance, is, in effect, to prohibit the consumption of the manufactures of Great Britain, as our desires to procure them have at all times been equal to, and sometimes exceed, our ability to pay for them. Whence it follows, that a policy which insures a small immediate revenue, at the expense of a great, though indirect, national gain, is mean and sordid, unworthy the noble enterprising spirit of a commercial nation.

But I should leave this subject very imperfect, indeed, if I should omit two great funds of national wealth and power, the fisheries and the fur trade. The first of these is a mine richer than that of Potosi, and more inexhaustible. For while our fisheries serve as a great subject of commerce, they are also a fruitful nursery of brave, hardy seamen, trained up to fatigue, to difficulty and danger.

The fur trade, which is now secured almost beyond the reach of accident, is doubly valuable, as it is enjoyed solely and exclusively—an advantage which is not confined to a monopoly of the raw materials, and enhances their price only, but enables Great Britain to be both the merchant, and the manufacturer also, and that upon her own terms; while other nations must depend upon a precarious, uncertain supply, which may either be raised in its price, or totally withheld, as the fluctuating policy of interest or friendship shall require. This acquisition is not only valuable, as it will probably revive a languishing, dying manufactory, but as it is a present, an actual, and considerable source of revenue, both on the home consumption, and also on that of foreigners.*

These are a few of the principal advantages with which a proper cultivation, establishment and tender regard of the Colonies may be attended to the Mother Country. She has, likewise, many inferior ones. The residence of those of affluent fortunes who may be led thither by views of education, or mere curiosity, is not altogether unworthy regard. These all depend on, and can only flow from a perfect, complete union—by supporting that relationship between the Mother Country and her Colonies, which has planted in their bosoms so strong and lively an affection, as to distinguish Great Britain by the tender, endearing appellation of Home.

But it is time now that we should turn to the Colonies, and see what advantages they may propose to themselves from a dutiful and affectionate union with the Mother Country; and from our past feelings we shall readily acknowledge we stand in need of her protection, nurture and care. Exposed by our situation, by a rivalship and competition of interests, and yet in

* In 1843, Captain Fremont, with an American exploring party, reached the waters of the Columbia River. His estimate is, that 90,000 buffalo skins are annually traded in that region, but that a far greater number of the animals are wantonly slaughtered. Before another seventy years shall have elapsed, the once great fur trade will have become extinct.

a state of infancy, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to form any union among ourselves that would be sufficient to repel the attacks of a formidable invader. In this weak, this defenceless state, therefore, we must look up to our indulgent parent, whose vigorous, salutary aid we have so often already experienced. Upon her we must rely for support, and under her wing shelter ourselves against any attempts of those, whose principles and government are incompatible with our religion and liberty. A separation would be attended with certain ruin to the Colonies, in their present situation, as they must necessarily fall a prey to one or other of those powers, who would snatch with eagerness so tempting a prize.

The first principle of nature, self-preservation, therefore, dictates to the Colonies, a steady, a strict adherence to the Mother Country, as upon that depends the enjoyment of every invaluable privilege of a civil or religious nature. But we may not only consider her as the protector, but as the nursing mother of her Colonies. Arts, sciences, agriculture and commerce, rise by slow degrees, and are long before they arrive to any degree of perfection. They are not of quick or spontaneous growth. They must be planted, cherished and encouraged. And have we not experienced the tenderness of our Mother Country in this respect, by her bounties, dispersed not only in public channels, but by private societies and patriotic individuals? Have we not reason to expect a continuance, and perhaps an increase of her benevolent efforts in our behalf? Thus taking our enterprising genius by the hand, and leading it on in the paths of industry and useful improvements.

To turn the attention of the Colonies to the cultivation of those subjects of commerce which the Mother Country does not, or cannot produce, though to her it may be eventually profitable, is to the Colonies immediately and directly so; and when it is done by mild, by bountiful measures, deserves our gratitude and thankful returns. A fixed and permanent union between Great Britain and her Colonies, is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the peace and harmony of their internal administration. For to form the constitution and plan of a new government, or even to new model and revise the old, is no easy or inconsiderable task. That of the Mother Country has been the work of ages; and, to use the words of an eminent writer, seems dictated by wisdom itself. While, therefore, the colonists can enjoy all the blessings of an English constitution, undiminished and uninterrupted, it would be superlative madness and folly to run the risk of a change, which could not possibly be for the better, and might be infinitely worse. Unconnected and divided as they are at present, both in situation and interest (owing to the difference of settlement, of charters of religion, and commerce, which are often clashing,) how difficult, and next to impossible, would it be to rescue them from a state of anarchy; and form a constitution, for which I will venture to say, from the extent of America, there can no precedent be found; a constitution which, at the same time that it reconciles these jarring interests, must preserve every religious and civil liberty entire?

The difficulties of an union for the purposes of empire are almost insuperable. To canton out the provinces into petty independent kingdoms, besides the arduous task of settling the internal police, would subject them not only to perpetual quarrels with each other, but render them an easy prey to some foreign power, as they would singly be weak, though united under one head, truly formidable. The only remaining resource of desperate distress, must be to form the provinces into districts, having full power of legislation within themselves, but subject to the control of some supreme, superintendent authority raised out of the collective body, as in some instances in Germany, or with more probability like Holland or Switzerland. But this the vast extent of the Colonies will render almost impossible, as it would give being to an aristocracy,—a kind of government, as repugnant to the genius and temper of America as despotic monarchy.

I therefore repeat it, that the preservation of our laws, commerce, and every other blessing of domestic peace, by the wise policy of the Mother Country, can only be made the basis of a close and firm connexion between her and them.

Next to the security of a state, its wealth and convenience are to be regarded, and to judge how beneficial Great Britain is to the Colonies in this respect, it may be proper to remark, that as other countries produce the same commodities, and have hitherto been able to undersell the Americans in a variety of articles, wherever an exclusive, or even a preferable market has been given to the latter, the advantage must be obvious. This has been done in many instances by prohibitions, or by duties charged on such commodities as interfered with those from the Colonies, which in some cases amount to a prohibition. The British whale fishery has been almost wholly given up in favour of the American fisheries. Sugars, hemp, indigo, and tobacco, besides a variety of other articles from the Colonies, have met with every mark of encouragement, while the same commodities from other countries have been discountenanced, or wholly prohibited. This is wise and just policy in the Mother Country, at the same time that it discovers a tender regard to her children, and makes it their interest to unite more closely. In short, they have everything that can make a nation great, happy and powerful to hope from a union, everything that is dangerous to fear from a division.

“*Divide et impera,*” was the Roman motto. May it not be applicable to Great Britain and her American Colonies, who, if united, have proved themselves equal, nay, superior, to two of the principal powers of Europe; but if divided, if struggling with intestine commotions and civil discord, I fear will prove unable to contend with either. This, to use the expression of a great and eminent friend of the Colonies, is the grand Family Compact, which must be cemented by every tie of duty, loyalty and affection from the Provinces, and every mark of kind protecting tenderness from the Mother Country. A fatal, undiscerning policy had almost snapt these interesting cords asunder, never perhaps to have been closed again; but the guardian

genius of Britain and of America stept between them and ruin, and with outstretched hand saved a sinking nation.

The Romans decreed a crown to him who saved the life of a citizen in battle; but what crowns or statues can do sufficient honour to the man or men who save a country, a kingdom, in the hour of distress, and rescue a falling state from the brink of ruin? Rome may justly boast her Brutus, her Curtius, her Cato and her Tully—they were the Pitts, the Conways and the Birrēs of that age, alike warmed by the sacred fire of liberty, alike crowned with immortality, and handed down to posterity the wonder and delight of admiring nations. These glorious architects, nobly aided by many others whose names will be long held in veneration, have propped the tottering fabric of the British empire, and pointed out that noble, generous policy, which will make one great system of government, whereof Britain will be the common centre of attraction.

Under such a policy, we can with joy look forwards, and behold peace, liberty, and commerce, diffusing their kindly influence over all the parts of Great Britain's empire; whose true happiness and permanent security can be no way effectually established but by "a perpetual union between her and her American Colonies!"

No. II.—Page 222.

BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND.

EXTRACT FROM COLONEL ATLEE'S JOURNAL.

Tuesday, August 27th.—This morning before day, the Camp was alarmed by an attack upon the picket stationed upon the lower road, leading to the Narrows, commanded by Major Burd, of the Pennsylvania Flying Camp. About daylight, a part of Lord Stirling's brigade, viz., Colonel Smallwood's, Colonel Hazlitt's, part of Lutz and Kechline's Flying Camp, and part of mine, in the whole about 2300 men, under the command of Major General Sullivan, and the Brigadiers Lord Stirling and Parsons, marched to support the picket attacked by the enemy.* About half after seven, the enemy were discovered advancing about two and a half miles from the lines at Brooklyn in order, their field artillery in front. This proved the left wing of the British army, the fourth and sixth brigades,

* In the Appendix to Ridgley's Annals of Annapolis, is a very spirited letter of Colonel Smallwood. He mentions that Colonel Haslet and himself were detained in New York on a court-martial. They crossed early on the morning of the 27th, and found their regiments engaged. His narrative of the Battle of Long Island is very interesting.

composed of the following regiments, 17th, 23d, 40th, 42d, 44th, 46th, 55th, 57th, and 64th, under the command of Major-General Grant. I then received orders from Lord Stirling with that part of my battalion in the field, to advance and oppose the enemy's passing a morass at the foot of a fine rising ground, upon which they were drawing up, and give him time to form the brigades upon the heights. This order I immediately obeyed, exposed without any kind of cover to the enemy's fire of artillery charged with grape. We sustained their fire until the brigade was formed. I then filed to the left, and took post on a fine woody eminence on the left of the brigade. My troops were just posted, when I received a reinforcement of two companies from the Delaware, with orders to file off further to the left, and prevent, if possible, a large detachment of the enemy from turning the left of the brigade. Upon filing off to the left, according to the orders received, I espied at the distance of about three hundred yards, a hill of clear ground, a proper situation to endeavour to oppose the regiments endeavouring to flank us, which hill I determined if possible to gain before them, judging they were likewise making for it. On marching up the hill, and within about thirty yards of the summit, we unexpectedly received a heavy fire from the enemy, taking post there before me, notwithstanding the forced march I made. Upon receiving the heavy fire, my detachment, under a continued and exceeding warm fire of the enemy, formed in order. The two companies of the Delaware regiment, excepting the Lieutenants Stewart and Harney, with about sixteen privates, broke, and had nearly drawn after them the whole of my detachment. This caused a moment's halt, but the officers and men recovering from the surprise at receiving so rough and unexpected a salutation, upon receiving my orders to advance, immediately obeyed with such resolution, that the enemy, after a severe conflict of a few minutes, left me master of the hill, leaving behind them a lieutenant, and six privates wounded and fourteen privates killed. My troops, flushed with this advantage, were for pushing after the flying enemy, but perceiving at about sixty yards from the hill we had just gained, across a hollow way, a stone fence lined with wood, from behind which we might be greatly annoyed, I ordered them not to advance, but maintain possession of the hill, which answered at this time every necessary purpose; the order was immediately obeyed, when we found by a heavy fire from the fence that it was lined, as I expected. The fire was as briskly returned by my brave soldiers. The enemy finding it too hot, and too well directed, retreated to and joined the right of this wing of their army. In this severe conflict I lost my worthy friend and dear Colonel Parry, whom in the midst of the action, and immediately after he fell, I ordered to be borne by four soldiers off the field into the lines at Brooklyn.* The enemy's situation here was so advantageous, that had they been marksmen, and directed their fire with judgment, they might have cut off

* Caleb Parry, a gallant officer from Chester County, Pennsylvania.

the greatest part of my detachment, I having left for the security of my right flank, and to protect my rear in case of retreat, a company in a wood upon my right. After this first attack, which continued in the whole for about fifteen minutes, we brought from the field such of their wounded, who I judged might be assisted, and about twenty-five stand of arms. Of the arms I distributed to such of my soldiers as were the most indifferently armed; the wounded I placed in my rear, under the shade of some bushes, it being intensely hot, and the wounded lieutenant taken, at our first gaining the hill, I sent to Lord Stirling by a drum and fife; he died on the way. After placing the proper guards, I ordered my fatigued soldiers to rest themselves.

We continued in this situation about twenty minutes, when the enemy was discovered marching down to make a second attempt for the Hill. Both officers and soldiers immediately flew to arms, and with remarkable coolness and resolution sustained and returned their fire for about ten minutes, when the enemy were obliged once more to a precipitate flight, leaving behind them, killed, Lieut. Col. Grant, a number of privates, and a great many wounded: those wounded, not mortally, I likewise removed into my rear; one sent to Lord Stirling that had received a wound in the leg. I sent my Adjutant to his Lordship with an account of my successive advantages, to know his Lordship's further orders, and to request a reinforcement. My Adjutant returned with two companies of riflemen of the flying camp, who remained with me a few minutes, being soon ordered to rejoin their corps. Very luckily, after this second engagement an ammunition cart belonging to Col. Huntington's regiment arrived at my post, of which we stood in great need, having entirely exhausted our ammunition, and fired many rounds from that taken from the enemy, every time we had the good fortune to beat them off the field. The officers were extremely alert, and from the ammunition so opportunely arrived, soon supplied their men with sufficient stock to sustain another attack, should the enemy think proper to make it. They did not suffer us to wait long; in about half an hour we were alarmed by their appearance the third time. The eagerness of the officers and soldiers to receive them deserves my warmest acknowledgments and those of their country. They were received as usual, and as usual fled, after a warm conflict of about ten or twelve minutes. I now determined to pursue; but observed a regiment, which proved to be the 22d or Royal Highlanders, coming down to sustain the Royal Runners, who were the 23d and 24th. I halted, and prepared to receive them likewise; but the drubbings their friends had so repeatedly received I believe prevented them, and they seemed satisfied with protecting the refugees and conducting such as were able to the army. Major Burd, who was taken at the attack of the picket in the night, and was at General Grant's quarters during the above several attacks, informed me after each great numbers of officers and soldiers came in wounded. I fully expected, as did my officers, that the strength of the British army was advancing in this quarter, with intention to have taken this route; but how

greatly were we deceived when intelligence was received that the centre, composed of the Hessians, and the right wing were rapidly advancing by our rear, and that we were nearly surrounded. This we were soon convinced of by an exceeding heavy fire about a mile in our rear, no troops being in that quarter to oppose the march of this grand body of the British army but Col. Miles's two battalions of riflemen, Col. Willis's regiment of Connecticut, and a part of Lutz's battalion of Pennsylvania flying camp.

I once more sent my Adjutant to Lord Stirling, to acquaint him with my last success, and for further orders, but receiving no answer, and after waiting for the enemy more than half an hour, they not approaching in front, those in the rear drawing very near, I judged it most prudent to join the brigade, where I might be of more service than in my present situation. I therefore ordered a march, leaving upon the field, killed, Lieut. Col. Grant and upwards of sixty men, and a great number wounded, besides those taken at sundry times into my rear. The world may judge of my surprise, when, coming to the ground where our brigade had been drawn up, to find they had gone off, without my receiving the least intelligence of the retreat, or orders what to do. I could, I doubt not, with considerable loss, have made my retreat; but perceiving at a distance, near the water, the rear of our troops, and at the same time a body of the enemy advancing towards them, who proved to be the British Grenadiers, commanded by Col. Monckton, these were attacked by a few brave fellows not able to prevent them. I ordered my fatigued party once more to advance and take possession of a post and rail fence at the foot of a rising ground, over which the grenadiers were moving with great rapidity.* The timely assistance brought these few brave fellows by a party this day often tried, and as often victorious, encouraged those already engaged, and obliged the Grenadiers to quit the ground they had gained, and to retire to a fence lined with wood. Here we kept up a close and constant fire for upwards of a quarter of an hour, until the brigade had retreated out of our sight. Our ammunition now again entirely spent, and our retreat after the brigade effectually cut off, I was then obliged to file off to the right with what men I could collect, and endeavour to find a way out in that quarter. After various struggles, running through the fire of many of the enemy's detachments, and nearly fatigued to death, not having ate or drank since the day before about four o'clock in the afternoon, no alternative presenting, I was obliged to surrender to the 71st Highlanders, having with me about forty, officers included. About 5 o'clock arrived at General Howe's quarters, receiving as we passed through the right wing of the British army, the most opprobrious and scurilous language.

Thus ended the unfortunate 27th August, during which myself and small detachment underwent inexpressible fatigue, and escaped death in a variety of instances; and although the day terminated unsuccessfully, I have the

* Sir William Howe, in his despatch to the Ministry, reports Colonel Monckton as severely wounded.

pleasing reflection that sundry times the entire ruin of the troops, was by my small detachment prevented. First, in the three successful attacks made upon the 23d and 44th British regiments, who were attempting to turn our left, and lastly in preventing the Grenadiers from destroying the rear in their retreat over the water.

In the first, Grant fell,—and in the last were sundry officers, and many soldiers killed and mortally wounded through the body. I myself, several months after, was shown the graves of several of the officers who fell at this time. I cannot here forbear testifying my acknowledgments to those brave few for their courage this day so repeatedly shown. I think I may, without vanity, conclude, that no regiment in this or any other service, considering the disparity of numbers, and discipline, has, in the same time, performed greater services.

*Minutes of the Council of War on the evacuation of Long Island.**

“ At a Council of War, held at Long Island, August 29th, 1776.

“ Present, His Excellency General Washington; Major-generals, Putnani, Spencer; Brigadier Generals, Mifflin, M'Dougall, Parsons, Scott, Wadsworth, Fellows.

“ It was submitted to the consideration of the Council, whether under all circumstances, it would not be eligible to leave Long Island, and its dependencies, and remove the army to New York. Unanimously agreed in affirmative, for the following reasons:

“ 1st. Because our advanced party had met with a defeat, and the wood was lost, where we expected to make a principal stand.

“ 2d. The great loss sustained in the death, or the captivity of several valuable officers, and their battalions, or a large part of them, had occasioned great confusion and discouragement among the troops.

“ 3d. The heavy rains which fell two days and nights with but little intermission, had injured the arms, and spoiled a great part of the ammunition; and the soldiery being without cover, and obliged to lay in the lines, were worn out, and it was to be feared could not be retained in them in any order.

“ 4th. From the time the enemy moved from Flatbush, several large ships had attempted to get up, as supposed, into the East River, to cut off our communication, by which the whole Army would have been destroyed, but the wind being northeast, could not effect it.

“ 5th. Upon consulting with persons of knowledge of the harbour, they were of opinion that small ships might come between Long Island and Governor's Island, where there are no obstructions, and which would cut off the communication effectually; and who were also of opinion that the — sunk between Governor's Island and the City of New York, were no sufficient security for obstructing that passage.

“ 6th. Though our lines were fortified with some strong redoubts, yet a great part of them were weak, being *abbatied* with brush, and affording no

* For this, I am indebted to Mr. Sparks.

strong cover, so that there was reason to apprehend they might be forced, which would have put our troops in confusion, and having no retreat they must have been cut in pieces, or made prisoners.

"7th. The divided state of the troops, render our defence very precarious, and the duty of defending long and extensive lines, at so many different places, without proper conveniences and cover, so very fatiguing, that the troops had become dispirited by their incessant duty and watching.

"8th. Because the enemy had sent several ships of war into the Sound to a place called Flushing Bay, and from the information received, that a part of their troops were moving across Long Island that way, there was reason to apprehend that they meant to pass over land and form an encampment above Kingsbridge, in order to cut off and prevent all communication between our army and the country beyond them, or to get in our rear."

No. III.—Page 364.

EMPLOYMENT OF INDIANS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF PHILADELPHIA.

The two following reports were made by the Committee of Congress in 1778, at a time when Mr. Reed was at Camp. The originals are in the Department of State at Washington, and are in the handwriting of Gouverneur Morris. The project, though sanctioned by the Commander-in-chief and Congress, was not carried into effect.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

SIR,
Camp near the Valley Forge, February 20th, 1778.

We are to acknowledge your favour of the 7th inst., received the 13th, inclosing the resolves of Congress on the Quartermaster-General's department. The subject is very important, and we only wait for some further information, when we shall do ourselves the honour of laying our sentiments before Congress, on the material alteration proposed in this office.

We now, sir, beg leave to submit to your consideration a proposition of employing a number of Indians in the American army. We have fully discussed it with the General, and upon the maturest deliberation are induced to recommend it to Congress. We are of opinion no measure can be adopted so effectual to break off the pernicious intercourse which the disaffected inhabitants of this country still hold with the enemy, from which they derive the greatest advantages. Exclusive of the wholesome supplies of provisions by which they refresh their numerous sick, and check the

advances of the scurvy, it is the most sure and certain source of intelligence. Through this channel they are constantly apprised not only of every material transaction of our army, but of the quarters of our troops, and situation of such active Whigs as are either occasionally passing, or yet reside within the reach of their excursions. Hence almost every day furnishes an instance of some surprise and capture. From repeated successes they grow confident and venture in small parties a considerable distance, carrying off with them such straggling officers, soldiers, and incautious Whigs as they find in their route. Their progress in this business is the more alarming, as they are now joined by a number of Tories perfectly acquainted with the country, well mounted and equipped, who not only serve as guides to the British Horse, but venture upon separate expeditions. The terror of these excursions is so great that it will, unless seasonably checked, endanger the communication of the army with its supplies, and absolutely deprive us of all assistance from our friends in the lower parts of the three counties of Bucks, Chester, and Philadelphia. We can foresee but two objections to employing the Indians on the flanks and advance of the army. The danger of indiscriminate injury to the well and ill affected, and prevention of desertion from the enemy. But his Excellency is of opinion both may be obviated by proper precautions, or at least so far guarded as to justify the expediency of the measure, and render the experiment less hazardous than it may appear at first view.

But we do not, sir, confine our ideas to the present moment, we think the restless spirits of the savages will not allow them to remain inactive. If we do not find subjects to employ them on, we fear our enemies will, and we have only to choose whether these shall be British troops, or the inhabitants of our defenceless frontiers.

As it is in contemplation to form a flying army composed of light infantry and riflemen, under the direction of officers distinguished for their activity and spirit of enterprise, it is proposed to mix about four hundred Indians with them; being thus incorporated with our own troops, who are designed to skirmish, and in detachments and light parties, as well as lead the attack, we hope their irregularities will be restrained and any excesses prevented. We fear a greater number would rather injure than promote the service, as they claim access at all times, and on all occasions to the Commander-in-chief, and expect clothing and dourceurs, which we fear our scanty supplies will not afford but in very moderate quantities. The number therefore we propose, we flatter ourselves may be easily procured, their good humour preserved, and sufficiently answer the purposes we have in view.

Nor do we think ourselves less warranted to say that there is great reason to believe the novelty of their appearance in the field, the circumstances of horror and affright which attend their attack, will have a great effect upon the minds of men wholly unacquainted with such an enemy. Upon the foreign troops we doubt not it would operate in a high degree, and when we consider upon what trivial circumstances the fate of battles

often turns, and the constant attention shown by the nice observer of the human heart in the military line, to everything which can discompose and terrify it, we trust we shall not be thought visionary or chimerical.

Upon the whole, sir, by the request and desire of the General, we beg leave to recommend it as a measure of policy and utility worthy the attention of Congress. If it should meet your approbation, Colonel Gist, a gentlemen of much acquaintance and experience with the southern Indians, will most cheerfully receive your commands, and is recommended to us by General Washington as a man of approved spirit and conduct, in whom the greatest confidence may be safely reposed. The situation of the Oneidas to the northward is such, that perhaps it will be found our truest interest to take them into service, even if little is expected from them. They are threatened by the surrounding tribes, and declare that unless we can protect them, they must however reluctantly take up the hatchet against us, or be entirely cut off. We cannot protect them unless we take the nation into our country, which may be done by settling their wives and children for the present, in the State of New York, as the Commissioners may think proper, and bringing their warriors to their army, for whose fidelity and perseverance we shall then have the best pledges, without the odium of demanding them.

We are, with the greatest respect and regard,

Sir, your most obedient and very humble servant,

FRANCIS DANA.

By order.

P. S. Having communicated this letter to his Excellency, he wishes to add that no time is to be lost in coming to a resolution, and despatching Colonel Gist, as the distance is very great, and the previous ceremonies and preparations will take up some time; and that Colonel Gist being now detached with a party of fictitious Indians upon the lines, cannot attend Camp, so soon as was intended, but will set out in a very few days, if the plan is approved.

TO THE HONOURABLE, THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Moore Hall, 2d March, 1778.

SIR,

We did ourselves the honour to write to you some days since upon the propriety of taking savages into the public service, to act as light troops upon outposts, advanced parties, and the like. In conversation with Baron Steuben upon the subject, he observed that the Austrians always use the Croats, (a kind of white Indian,) for such purposes, and to so good effect that the King of Prussia imitated them by enrolling a body of irregulars, to cover in like manner his army, but without answering the end, as soldiers too frequently desert, which is fatal when very great dependence is placed

upon them. Colonel Gist, who is made the bearer of this letter, will do himself the honour to satisfy Congress in such farther inquiries as to the utility of this corps, as they may think it expedient to make. Colonel Gist will be happy in rendering every service to the continent which is in his power, consistent with that attention which justice requires to his private affairs. In a former embassage of this kind, he involved himself in a very considerable expense, so much beyond the extent of his funds, that he was obliged to mortgage his plantation for money which has been applied to the public service.

Public honour requires that the account he will deliver for this expenditure should be speedily and satisfactorily adjusted, and prudence will lead him to provide that monies be advanced him for his personal charge, and the maintenance of the Indians with him. This gentleman hath also a further demand upon the public, for goods which he promised to seventeen savages which were employed usefully last summer, upon the eastern shore of Maryland, and although these goods were not specifcated in any bargain with them, yet what he says to them in future will have little influence unless they see some kind of performance to follow on such general promises.

In order that no mistakes may arise in future upon this subject, and also inasmuch as it may flatter the vanity of these people, which is *not* taking them by the *strongest* side, he suggests the propriety of making out the terms upon which they are to be taken in the service, and this in writing from Congress; but how far this may be proper we will not pretend to say, submitting it entirely to your superior discretion.

Colonel Gist also expects the liberty to take with him a faithful assistant, who is to provide for the Indians upon their route, a business which it is impracticable for the principal to attend to, his time being taken up in the management of those whom he conducts, preventing or adjusting little differences which arise between them and the inhabitants and the like.

When the savages shall have arrived, it will be necessary to have with them interpreters, as there would be danger in permitting them to go out in detached parties without the power of making themselves understood; indeed there would be great use in having a few men from their neighbourhood to serve as irregulars with them, which would prevent, perhaps, mistakes which might be fatal. For these reasons the Colonel thinks it would be proper to employ some few interpreters, and also to enlist for the special service, about fifty men, of which as many as possible are to understand the Indian language.

Upon the whole, sir, we cannot but think that much good would arise from employing these turbulent borderers, as they would certainly keep the enemy compact, prevent desertion in our troops, make us masters of intelligence, and give us pledges of their fidelity.

We are, sir, respectfully,
Your most obedient and humble servant,

By order.

FRANCIS DANA.

No. IV.—Page 372.

THE BRITISH COMMISSIONERS OF 1778.

FREDERICK HOWARD, FIFTH EARL OF CARLISLE was a distinguished man of fashion and of letters, according to the literary standard of his day. He was the guardian of Lord Byron, and grandfather of the present Lord Morpeth. Many of his letters from America, which exhibit his character in a very amiable light, will be found in the 3d vol. of Jesse's Correspondence of George Selwyn. His appointment was made the subject of very severe cavil on the part of the opposition. In the debate on the Conciliatory Bills in the Lords, this was especially the case. On the 9th of March, the Duke of Grafton alluded to the report of the appointment of Lord Carlisle as one of the Commissioners, and though he gave him credit for abilities and many amiable qualities, professed that he thought his lordship capable of almost every trust that his Majesty could repose in him except the present, for there were certain prejudices in the people of America against certain peculiarities of his lordship. The Duke of Richmond said, "I have lately been told that one of the Governors in America made objection to the Congress because some of them sat in council with woollen caps on. Congress were highly offended at this, and persisted in doing so. How inadequate, therefore, must this embassy be, where a noble lord, bred up in all the softness that European manners make fashionable to rank,—I say how inadequate must such an embassy be to men in woollen nightcaps."—*Parl. Reg.* vol. x. 302, 304.

Wilkes on a later occasion thus describes the chief Commissioner: "To captivate the rude members of Congress, and civilize the wild inhabitants of an unpolished country, a noble Peer was very properly appointed chief of the honourable embassy. His lordship, to the surprise and admiration of that part of the new world, carried with him a green ribband, the gentle manners, winning behaviour, and soft insinuating address of a modern man of quality, and a professed courtier. The muses and graces with a group of little laughing loves were in his train, and for the first time crossed the Atlantic."—19 *Parliamentary History*, 1338.

I find in a London opposition newspaper, (copied of course in America,) of 13th March, 1778, the following squib:

March 13.—“A correspondent acquaints us, that the baggage of the *first*

Commissioner going out to America, is making up to be ready for his lordship next week; and as the contents are a little *curious for a Plenipotentiary*, he has sent us the following particulars of it:

Six dozen of best scented chicken gloves.
One dozen bottles essence of roses.
Twelve ditto lavender.
Thirty-six pound of red and white powder.
Half a dozen opera glasses.
Forty boxes of pearl-coloured powder for the teeth.
Three gross of brushes, ditto.
Ninety wardrobe cases for clothes.
Forty pair of *red* heeled shoes.
One dozen muffs.
Twelve dozen best toothpicks.
An Abridgment of the History of America, for the use of children.
Hoyle upon Games.
Institutes of the Game of Whist.
The Calculation of Chances.
Two portable billiard tables.
A chest of sweetmeats.
Grotius de Jure Belli et Pacis, in calf.
Lord Carlisle's Poems.
A wooden horse to exercise on ship-board.
Three Italian greyhounds.
A piano-forte.
And **HIS SECRETARY.**"

Referring probably to Lord Carlisle and Governor Johnstone, General Fitzpatrick in the House of Commons on 2d June, said, "He had learned since his arrival in England to be astonished at nothing, for since two men of such opposite principles had gone out with the American commission, he should not be surprised at anything that might happen. But he thought they should at least have gone out in two ships, without they had come to a previous agreement before they sailed not to mention the word America for fear of quarrelling."—(*Parliamentary Register*, ix. p. 270.)

Lord Carlisle was accompanied by Antony Morris Storer as his private Secretary, of whom some reminiscences are preserved in the Selwyn Correspondence. His lordship was afterward Viceroy of Ireland, and died in 1825.

WILLIAM EDEN was the brother of Robert Eden, the last Colonial Governor of Maryland. He had been a supporter of the measures of government, at least in the early part of the contest with America. In vol. v. p. 962, *Force's American Archives*, will be found two letters from Mr. Eden, breathing anything but kindness to America. Between 1785 and 1789, he was suc-

cessively British Ambassador to France, Spain, and Holland. In the latter year he was made by Mr. Pitt, Baron Auckland of Ireland, and in 1793, was advanced to the English peerage. Lord Auckland died 21st May, 1814. Neither Lord Carlisle nor Mr. Eden, seem to have taken an obtrusive part in the business of the Commission, leaving it to their more bustling colleagues.

GEORGE JOHNSTONE a Scotchman, son of Sir James Johnstone, appointed Governor of Florida by Lord Bute, sometimes called Commodore, but usually Governor Johnstone, had been an active member of the House of Commons, and a steady opponent of Lord North's ministry. His speeches in the imperfect reports which have been preserved down to a certain period, were apparently among the most effective made. In the debate in the House of Commons on the Conciliatory Bills, on 10th April, Mr. Fox condemned them vehemently, and declared that if they produced any good, he should attribute it solely to the influence of Governor Johnstone. (*Parl. Reg.* ix. 151.) He begged the House of Commons to observe that the ministry, conscious of their own inability, were obliged when they wanted service to be performed, to call to their assistance the very men who had condemned their measures, and who had uniformly despised them. In 1770, he had fought a bloodless duel with Lord G. Germain. On his return from America he became a supporter of Administration, and in 1781 returned to the naval service. A recent writer thus describes his later career. "The principal champion of Sir Hugh Palliser, was Commodore (or as he was more commonly called), Governor Johnstone. This officer was not held in much estimation by his profession, but he had considerable powers of oratory and excelled in personal invectives. He had formerly been a Whig, but had seceded from his party; and his speeches were marked with all the bitterness of feeling against former friends which so frequently characterizes the political apostate. He seems to have had a kindred feeling with Sir Hugh Palliser, for the following year, in order to screen his own incapacity, he preferred charges against a Captain Sutton, who was honourably acquitted, and in his turn brought an action against Johnstone for charging him maliciously with an offence of which he was innocent. Sutton obtained a verdict of £5000 damages. Johnstone applied for a second trial; and a second verdict awarded the increased sum of £6000, against him." (*Life of Admiral Keppel*, vol. ii. p. 308, London, 1842.) Governor Johnstone died in 1787.

The Commissioners were accompanied by Dr. Adam Ferguson, the author of the History of Rome, &c., as their Secretary. This post it seems was sought by Jeremy Bentham. In a letter from Bentham, published in *Bowring's Memoir*, chap. iii. p. 64, he says, "Amongst Lind's acquaintance was Governor Johnstone, who," he told me, "was so delighted with the 'Fragment on Government,' that he used to go about with it in his pocket, boring people with it. This was not long before his departure for the revolted Colonies, as one of the Commissioners for sparing the lives of two and three

millions of human beings, on condition of universal penitence. Hearing of this, and having an ardent desire of seeing a little of the world, and more particularly of the political world, it seemed to me a good opportunity of taking my chance of doing so in the capacity of that Commissioner's Secretary. Lind, at my desire, mentioned the same to Johnstone. The answer was much regret at not having heard of it sooner, he being engaged to Ferguson, the Scotch professor, author of Roman History, and some book on morals, I forget the title of it. The examples of Greece and Rome had not been lost on Ferguson. During the voyage he was urgent with the Commissioners, as I learnt afterwards from good government authority, to put to death, man, woman, and child, as many as they could catch, as an inducement to the rest to take the benefit of the proffered grace."

It seems that on the return of the Commissioners to England, the authorship of their valedictory manifesto, which was very threatening in its tone, was attributed to Ferguson. On the 11th of June, 1779, in the debate on Sir William Meredith's motion respecting peace, Mr. Eden denied this, and said it was entirely the work of the Commissioners.—*Parliamentary History*, vol. xx. p. 850.

Dr. Ferguson died in 1816, at the age of 93. His life comprised varied incidents. He was a fighting Chaplain at Fontenoy, (*Lockhart's Scott*, vol. vii. p. 61,) and a diplomatist in the wilds of America.

In the same speech, from which an extract has been made, Governor Johnstone made this further extraordinary declaration :

"The orders to Sir Henry Clinton, which were shown me, breathed a spirit of activity and coercion. I thought, with the measures I recommended, the army was sufficient. I think so still. Nay, I am perfectly convinced of it now, and I am supported by the opinions of the best officers on the spot. Instead of that, we secretly directed an ignominious retreat, after all the preparations and expense necessary for a vigorous campaign had been incurred. Can it be said, with justice, that I failed in my expectations, whenever everything I was made to believe, and which I deemed necessary for the effect, was disappointed and contradicted, nay, concealed not only from me, but from the other Commissioners, with whom I had the honour to be joined. *If I had known Philadelphia had been ordered to be evacuated, I would never have gone.* The other Commissioners have often declared the same sentiments on the subject." (*Report of Speech published in Pennsylvania Packet, and General Advertiser*, March 9, 1779.) Gordon, no authority, by the bye, except for gossip, (vol. iii. p 130,) says, "Mr. Eden brought with him secret orders for the speedy evacuation of Philadelphia; they were so secret as not to be made known either to himself or Governor Johnstone. Whether the Earl of Carlisle met with the like treatment is not yet ascertained. It has been publicly ascertained, that the orders were dated exactly three weeks before the Commissioners sailed from England, which carries the date back to the last of March." Mr. Sparks in a Note and Appendix, (*Washington*, vi. pp. 395—548,) shows that

Sir Henry Clinton had determined to evacuate Philadelphia as early as 23d May, and perhaps earlier, and that the orders from the Ministry to the same effect were dated on the 21st March, immediately on the discovery of the French alliance, and were received by him several days before the arrival of the Commissioners. Mr. Eden may have been the bearer of a duplicate. On the whole, one of two things is certain, either that Governor Johnstone's statement was wilfully untrue, which is not probable, the Ministers being present to contradict him, or that Administration was guilty of the gratuitous blunder of reposing half-confidence in their agents. It is not probable that Lord Carlisle knew more than his colleagues, and the sudden despondency of the concluding sentence of his letter of 10th June to Selwyn, strengthens the belief that he too was mortified at what he learned on his arrival at Philadelphia. Such statesmanship is rarely to be met with on the pages of history. The discussions which took place in Parliament on the point, were angry and contradictory. Most of them occurred on the Address on the opening of the session in November, 1778. Mr. Fox said, "That the Commissioners were sent out in the dark as to everything intended, and that it was arranged that General Clinton should leave Philadelphia without giving the Commissioners two hours' warning." Speaking of Johnstone he said, "There was only one of the Commissioners who could have the ear of the people in America; he alone had been their friend in Great Britain; he was acquainted with the people of Pennsylvania — *he built his hopes in going out entirely on the temper of that Province*, and the moment he was landed, you left it." (*Par. Hist.* xix. 1324—8.) Wilkes went farther, and probably the report of his speech is Gordon's authority for the statement above referred to. Speaking of Mr. Eden, he said: "The next in the commission was only distinguished by a set of principles, wonderfully adapted to the spirit of coercion and cruelty hitherto prevailing the principles of penal law. I have only heard of one other principle belonging to this gentleman, the principle as well as practice of passive obedience in the Northern department. But, sir, this gentleman carried with him the real secret of the negotiation, and perhaps more extensive powers than were given to his colleagues. He knew of the order to evacuate Philadelphia—an order so disgraceful to our arms—so contrary to sound policy—long before it was suspected by either of his colleagues, but he would not trust them." (*Id.* 1338.)

In Governor Johnstone's speech, already referred to, he said: "On my arrival, the orders for the evacuation had been made public—the City was in the utmost consternation—a more affecting spectacle of woe I never beheld. The orders were so peremptory, that even the delay of four days to receive an answer from Congress could not be obtained." He added, "The Commissioners had prepared a letter for the Congress in a very different style, merely acquainting them of our arrival and our powers, and with our friendly disposition to promote a reconciliation, intending to wait their answer, but the unexpected situation of affairs occasioned by these orders, which

had been concealed from us before leaving England, though dated near a month before our departure, obliged us to alter our resolution." (*Id.* 1347, 8.) In the debate in the Lords in 1779, on the address of thanks, Lord Carlisle repeated the statement, that the orders for evacuation had been received before his arrival.

It is not easy in all this, and without access to the confidential correspondence of the government, to form any precise opinion on this vexed question. When statements so positive as those of Wilkes were made, they appear to have been received in silence by the Ministry. Mr. Eden was not, however, present. In his exculpatory speech in 1779, (20 *Par. Hist.* 846,) he did not allude to them. It is, however, probable that, had Johnstone felt himself aggrieved by his colleague being further trusted than he was, he would have noticed it.

I am tempted to make one further extract from Johnstone's speeches, already referred to incidentally in the text, as illustrative of his unscrupulous character, as well as of the credulity of the ministerial majority.

"The Commissioners were received at Philadelphia with all the joy which a generous people could express. Why were you so long a coming? was the general cry. Do not abandon us. Retain the army, and send them against Washington, and the affair is over. Ten thousand men will arm for you in this province, and ten thousand in the lower counties, the moment you take the field and can get arms. The declarations were general and notorious, and I am persuaded, if we had been at liberty to have acted in the field, our most sanguine expectations would have been fulfilled. I mixed with all ranks of men, from the prisoners in the gaol to the first people in the place, and as far as I could penetrate the human mind, I believe the sentiments of reconciliation and a return to the happy state in which they ordinarily lived, were sincere. But gentlemen say I am of an eager temper, and apt to be deceived. It is possible. I do not pique myself on never having been deceived. I can only say I never intentionally deceive. My judgment and opinions may be wrong, but they are the sentiments of my heart, and people must receive them with all those grains of deduction for my temper and the weakness of my understanding. After this precaution, I declare that I firmly believe two-thirds of the people of North America wish to return to the ancient connexion with Great Britain at this moment, and that nothing but a surrounding army and the diffidence they have in our support prevents that spirit from breaking out in acts of hostility against the Congress and committees."

Some of Johnstone's flourishing statements met with flat denials on the spot. In the debate in March, 1779, on the motion of censure on Administration, he said: "I have heard much of the starving and various distresses which the army underwent since I came to England; but I was an eye-witness to no such scenes of misery. On the contrary, the most plentiful markets I ever beheld were at New York and Philadelphia. The troops lived as well as could be wished, and rather in too great abundance for the hasty deeds of a soldier. Things were dear, but not from any want in the

articles, but the great plenty of money, circulated by such a fleet and army, with their attendants." (20 *Par. Hist.* 346.)

In reply, Sir John Wrottesley (*Id.* 359) said, "He was not a little amazed at what the Honourable Governor had said, relative to the great plenty which he saw at Philadelphia when he was there. He had himself shared in the distresses of the army; and so far from enjoying the luxuries of the table which the gentleman had described, he had often experienced the greatest difficulty to obtain the necessities of life."

In what spirit Johnstone's disappointment in his corrupt schemes left him, is apparent from his closing speech on the manifesto of the Commissioners, on the 4th December, 1778. (19 *Par. Hist.* 401.)

"Governor Johnstone said, he approved of the Proclamation throughout, and condemned the American Congress in the strongest terms. He thought no quarter ought to be shown to them, and if the infernals could be let loose on them, he should approve the measure. He said the Proclamation did mean a war of desolation; it meant nothing else; it could mean nothing else; and if he had been on the spot when it was issued, he would have signed it."

I am indebted to Mr. Bancroft for copies of the following papers connected with the Commission of 1778, which are of great interest, and which I have his full consent to publish. They are abstracts and copies of original papers belonging to Dr. Ferguson, and procured for Mr. Bancroft in Scotland. They consist of—

1. A private letter from the Commissioners to Lord George Germain, 15th June, 1778, expressive of their surprise and discontent on learning of the intended evacuation of Philadelphia.
2. An abstract, very roughly made, of the secret instructions to the Commissioners.
3. Letter of 4th November, 1778, to the Commissioners, from Lord George Germain.

I. COMMISSIONERS TO LORD GEORGE GERMAIN.

Philadelphia, 15th June, 1778.

As no reason had been given to us before we left England, either to believe or conjecture that the terms of reconciliation, however wise and liberal, tendered by Parliament to the Colonies, would be left almost solely to their own operation and effect, we were naturally surprised to learn that his Majesty's army was, by express orders from Great Britain, dated about three weeks before our departure from London, under the necessity of quitting this province, at a time the most critical to the opening of our commission, and with a tendency the most prejudicial to the conduct of our negotiation. In consequence of this order, the Commander-in-chief had already given notice of his intention to evacuate Philadelphia, and a considerable portion of the navy, in obedience of a similar order, had been with-

drawn from the Chesapeake Bay, and other important stations on these coasts, so that the access of French ships to supply the revolted Colonies, and confirm them in their supposed alliance with France, was entirely left open. This being the posture of his Majesty's forces by sea and land, we found the city and province of Philadelphia in great consternation, and the greater part of those who had put themselves under his Majesty's protection were either retiring on board ships in the river, or endeavouring to make their peace with Congress. At this time, according to our own information, a very important law had passed in the acting Assemblies of these Provinces, requiring all persons within a limited time to take the oaths to the confederated States of America, under the pain of forfeiting their estates and property in the province. Many of the inhabitants, seeing they were to be deprived of the protection of the King's forces, and likely to suffer from the effects of the violent resentment of an exulting and unrestrained enemy, were hastening to save their forfeiture by conforming themselves with this resolution. So that we found ourselves, by this untimely removal of his Majesty's army, and the readiness of the enemy to profit by it, likely to be deprived of all the advantages which we had reason to expect from the effect of the Conciliatory Bills, and the general repugnance of the people to French connexions, of which we have also had the most credible assurances since our arrival. The withdrawing of his Majesty's troops from this province for the purposes in view, is the more to be lamented, as the army under the command of General Washington is reported to be sickly and ill-provided, while his Majesty's forces here are in the best condition in respect to health, numbers, and preparations for the field. Under disappointment arising from these circumstances to his Majesty's well-affected subjects, and under this general aspect of affairs, we had reason to expect that Congress would reject all negotiations with us, except on the preliminary acknowledgment of their independence.

The Treaty of Alliance with France, the evacuation of Philadelphia, the leaving open the whole coast of America to foreign supplies, the free entrance for prizes, and these events rapidly following each other, and represented as the effect of consummate prudence on the part of the Congress to be supported by assistance from Europe, have so elated the persons in authority throughout the revolted Colonies, that we could not expect a more decent answer at present. We are, nevertheless, still of the opinion, that the defensive and offensive alliance with France, is disagreeable to a great proportion of the people, and have reason to believe that our terms are highly acceptable. But while General Washington's army appears able to keep the field, and continues to awe the country, there are no hopes that any of the Provinces will declare in our favour.

Hearing that General Clinton is to despatch a packet to-morrow morning, with an account of the operations of the army, under his command, we think it our duty to send the answer we have received from Congress, although we cannot particularly determine on the specific step we shall take in con-

sequence of it. On this subject, we shall without delay, consult with Sir Henry Clinton, who is now here, and give your Lordship in our next despatch, which we hope to forward in a few days, due information of the measures we are farther left to pursue in execution of his Majesty's commission.

(In a note to the Letter.)

(Johnstone calls the removal of the forces, without a communication with the Commissioners, or discretion left with the Commander-in-chief, a futile, ill-concerted, ill-advised retreat, subversive of all the purposes of the Commissioners, highly dishonourable to his Majesty's arms, and most prejudicial to the interest of his dominions.)

II. ORDERS.—Instructions to be observed by our right trusty and right beloved cousin and counsellor Frederick, Earl of Carlisle, Knight of the most ancient Order of the Thistle ; our right trusty and well-beloved cousin and counsellor, Richard, Lord Viscount Howe, of our Kingdom of Ireland ; our trusty and well-beloved Sir William Howe, Knight of the most noble Order of the Bath, Lieutenant-General, &c., &c. ; William Eden, Esq., one of our Commissioners for Trade and Plantations ; and George Johnstone, Esq., Captain in our Royal Navy, being our Commissioners appointed to treat, consult, and agree upon the means of quieting the disorders now subsisting in certain of our Colonies.

Given at, &c., 12th day of April, 1778.

Appointment

Proceed to America

Communicate arrival to Commander-in-chief of the American forces, or to any body of men, by whatever name known or distinguished, who may be supposed to represent the different provinces, colonies and plantations in America.

Address them by any style of title that may describe them, lay before them acts of Parliament, by virtue of which, we are enabled to appoint Commissioners, &c., express readiness to meet and confer with them, or any of them authorized for that purpose, in New York, or any place mutually agreed upon.

Offer them safe conduct, &c.

You may likewise assure them that as soon as peace is established, they shall, thenceforth, be protected in the ancient course of their trade and commerce, by the power of Great Britain, and we authorize you to admit any claim or title to independency in any distinction of men, during the time of treaty, and for the purpose of treaty.

If they should urge reference to Parliament as matter of objection, (i. e. that the Commissioners here are not authorized finally to conclude any treaty or agreement, inasmuch as any resolution must be reserved for the final approbation or disapprobation of the two Houses of Parliament.)

Commissioners will urge acts already passed, and preliminaries as proof

of sincerity, (an act for removing all doubts and apprehensions concerning taxation, &c.), (an act for repealing an act passed the 14th year of our reign, entitled an act for the better regulating the Government of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, &c.; also an act enabling us to appoint you, &c.)

Preliminaries to be consented to (To make any propositions that they can offer, and that you shall think reasonable to be entertained, the subject of an immediate reference to us and our two houses of Parliament, separate from the two other points of the treaty, &c.)

If they will provide Provincial Troops, no standing army to be kept in America in time of peace.

Nor any alterations in their government or charter, but by their own consent, (That none of the ancient governments or constitutions in the said Colonies shall be changed or varied without the consent or request of such of our respective Colonies, signified by their General Assemblies.)

If treaty with Congress fails, apply to bodies of men, or individuals. (That such propositions and offers should, in such manner as you shall see fit, be made public and known as generally as possible, and the first appearance of a desire in any province to revert to the ancient form of Government must be watched with the utmost attention, but, nevertheless, if an Assembly could be formed under your power of appointing a governor in the case, in which you are at liberty to enter upon such detached treaty, the good consequences, and extensive effects, in the operation of such Assembly, are obvious. You are, however, to avoid giving umbrage to the persons with whom you are publicly treating, and you are not to make any public appeal to the inhabitants of America, until you are satisfied that such public body of men, and the Commander-in-chief of the American forces, shall refuse to enter into, or proceed in such treaty.)

Proclamation.—(If you shall at length despair of bringing such body or bodies of men to a treaty, and if you find it proper, &c., to set forth a declaration for the information of our well-disposed subjects, &c. &c., of the earnest wishes of us, and our Parliament, for composing any differences, &c.)

Suspension of Arms.—(The propriety, nature, and extent of a suspension of arms, best determined on the spot in conjunction with the Commander-in-chief of our army and navy, but in the present apparent situation of things, it does not seem to us to be necessary or advantageous, the first overture should come from you. Nevertheless you or any three of you to determine this point, &c.)—goes on to present the proposals which among others appear to deserve attention.

Cessation of hostilities by sea, (suggesting, respecting mode, &c.)

(After the commencement of any truces, no person be molested for declaring his opinion, &c., and refusing to sign any test, &c.; all persons now confined on any of the above causes, to be set at liberty. No person to be punished from the above period but for some crime, and according to the known laws of the land, or for military offences, if that exception must be admitted.)

(All proceedings or forfeitures, &c., to be discontinued during the treaty, and in the progress of the treaty to be annulled, (to agree to the same with regard to any similar proceedings on our part:) to insist that all persons may reside quietly in their dwelling-houses, and remain in quiet possession of their estates. All churches and places of legal and tolerated worship to be opened, and ministers and congregations to be protected in, &c.; those demands to be made with due earnestness, even if upon some, or all of them, there should be found a necessity of relaxing.)

Basis of Treaty.—Condition.—(It being to be understood of 1763,) that the design expressed by our subjects in America to return to their condition of 1763, is the principle of the present negotiation, that proposition in general terms must be agreed to at once. But the explanation of it will lead to some discussion, and it is very essential, &c., to ascertain in the first place, demand of our subjects, &c.

Contribution (Just and reasonable that they should to us make good their own repeated declarations of their readiness to contribute to the public charge in common with all our other subjects; and seeing that they are to enjoy the common privileges of all other subjects, and they are the rather called upon to exercise this act of justice, as such constitution would now be a mere act of free will.)

Means of raising contribution.—(Sum required to be moderate ; may be taken upon a ratio of their numbers, tonnage, or exports. Increase of the payment in proportion to the increase of their abilities, and it becomes the interest of Great Britain to promote the industry, the trade, or the population of subjects in America.)

Provincial forces proposed, (if not agree to any specific measure, probably be easily brought to see that it is for their interest to maintain some forces at their own charge, &c.)

Commissioners to enter into the consideration and settle the number of troops, &c., other means of contribution proposed, (if this not agreed to,) viz.: by duties laid before 1763 being ceded, and a certain sum granted in lieu thereof, (port duties, postage, the escheats, the forfeited grants of lands, the quit rents,) if these fail, question to rest.

Practice of Courts of Justice to be regulated.

To admit representation in House of Commons.

Arrears of quit rents to be given up.

Pardon—Amnesty—Indemnity.

Trial of Treason in some place adjoining.

Obtain contribution.

Duty on foreign articles.

“ on foreign trade of America.

Restoration of rights, and compensation for losses.

Memorials and petitions of merchants and proprietors of lands, referred to Commissioners.

Case of the clergy.

May ultimately consent Governors to be elective. King to approve the election and issue the commissions to said governor.

Burdensome offices to be suppressed, and others to be granted under proper restrictions.

Further advantages must depend upon advantages they will yield to Great Britain.

(If a proper contribution can be obtained, it is obvious that all laws of revenue would then be reduced into a very small compass.)

Custom-house officers would in fact be officers of the province, (Custom-house officers, though appointed by us, would in fact be officers of the Province, to whose treasury the amount of the duties would be carried, and if they desired the appointment in such cases, by their Assemblies, there seems to be no objection, &c.)

Admiralty Courts (may be restrained in such manner as will satisfy our subjects in America, as far as it can be made consistent with a reasonable security, and an impartial administration of justice, &c. Trade—an extension of, might be fairly put in discussion. The principal of the Act of Navigation, and of 22d of the 7th and 8th of King William, has been relaxed in favour of many articles of American production, which are allowed to be carried directly to a European market, upon condition only of touching at an English port.)

Bounties to be least favoured (Impossible to foresee the particular demands, &c., in behalf of particular branches of trade. This only we direct you to observe in general, that no check should be given to any one of them. One caution, however, should be attended to, that, of all advantages, that bounties should be least favoured.)

(Upon the subject of Commercial regulations, the prevailing principle has always been to secure a monopoly of American commerce.)

(The fetters of Custom House regulations are but a weak security for this monopoly in practice; and it should seem the most effectual way to insure its continuance, would be to lay upon articles of foreign produce, not imported from Great Britain, the amount of the principal duties, whether collected for general or local intelligence.)

Judges independent. (They have objected to the judges holding commissions during good behaviour. If they are disposed to think differently, and also to give an independent provision to the judges, there could be no objections on our part, to give them commissions, if they are to receive them from us, during good behaviour.)

Practice of courts of justice to be regulated (to consent to any just and proper regulations, proposed, &c.)

If it should be proposed that a General Assembly, in the nature of the present Congress, and similar thereto, &c., be constituted, Commissioners not to decline it, but to see if a plan can be devised which will contribute to the welfare of the Colonies, and, at the same time, the sovereignty of the Mother Country be not infringed, &c.

(If desired to have a share in the representation in the House of Commons, such proposal may be admitted, as far as to refer it to the constitution of both houses, and it will be proper, that in stating such a proposition, the mode of representation, number of representatives, which ought to be very small, and the considerations offered on their part in return for so great a distinction and benefit, should be precisely and distinctly stated.)

To admit a representative in the House of Commons.

All arrears of quit rents to be given up. Pardon, amnesty, indemnity (offered to all that have been in the rebellion.)

Trial of treason in the same place adjoining.

(May treat of and agree upon any law to be proposed by us and our houses, &c.)

Contribution. (In return for all that you give, you are, if possible, to obtain a reasonable contribution and compensation directly from the several provinces.)

(Duty on foreign trade of America, paid in Europe, if it be further extended.)

Restoration of rights, and compensation for losses (ought to be made in the most ample manner, &c., the amount of such losses might be added to the debt incurred during the war). Memorials of merchants and proprietors of lands (for relief) referred to Commissioners. (Watch for an opportunity during the progress of the treaty, to provide relief for them.)

Care of the Clergy (Episcopal Clergy, "whose conduct has been so worthy, &c.", to attend to every opportunity for repairing their losses, and establishing their situations, &c.)

No vessels of war, but those commissioned by the king.

Command of forts and fortifications to be in the king.

Command in the king.

Prisoners of war, and prisoners in custody discharged.

Declaration of Independence need not be rescinded (will, in effect, be rescinded by the conclusion of the treaty).

Assemblies should be called (supposing upon the whole that the negotiation should fall chiefly into the House of the Congress, still highly expedient before close of negotiation, that several assemblies should be called, when the material concessions, on the part of Great Britain are settled, and it becomes necessary to fix terms, on the part of America, to sign, sanction, and effect, &c.)

(As it is impossible to foresee all the matters that may arise, Commissioners are at liberty to proceed upon any matter within the compass of their commission, and to give all possible satisfaction to our subjects, and consistent with that degree of connexion which is necessary for preserving between us and our subjects there.)

Not to break off treaty on adverse party insisting on some points directed not to be given up—provided the same be short of open and avowed independence (except as relates only to the purpose of treaty).

But wait for further orders.

When Assemblies should be called.

These instructions not to preclude other matters of discussion.

If they propose repeal of the declaratory act, refer it to a declaration to be framed at the close of the treaty. Better to refer these propositions as terms to be required from America. (To postpone the discussion open there to second part of the treaty, concerning those terms which may be required from our subjects in America.)

To encourage any proposed mode of theirs for such contributions.

Contributions not to be made at all events a condition of the treaty.

Charters (If the repeal of the act for altering the government of the Massachusetts Bay, and our royal declaration, &c., be not sufficient to quiet all alarms on this head, you may admit, as a stipulation on their part to be declared by us, and our two houses of Parliament, that no bill for the alteration of any of the constitutions of the Colonies, shall be brought into Parliament, but upon a petition from the Assembly of such Colony).

(Commissioners may consent to a suspension of all or any part of acts passed since 1763, in manner hereinafter mentioned. The 15th chapter of the 4th of our reign, and 52d chapter of 6th of our reign, and 2d chapter of 7th of, &c., as far as these concern the regulations of trade, ought to be postponed, in —— of the advantages of commerce to be allowed to America, which advantages must be taken upon a larger scale than merely upon the acts of our reign, passed since 1763. The 29th chapter of the 4th of, &c., is for the benefit of our Colonies, and falls under the regulations of trade; 34th of 4th, &c., regulates and restrains paper bills of credit.)

Paper bills of credit not to be legal tender in private payment. (But this article need occasion no specific difficulty in the settlement of the treaty; if upon other grounds the provincial Legislatures are finally allowed to have the power of passing acts of a local nature, the regulation of a paper currency is none of the acts, and the evils which will arise from an improper exercise of this power in this instance are of a sort to correct themselves.)

(The next act is 18th chapter of the 6th of our reign, for quartering troops, in fact annulled by the rebellion, and became matter of new regulation, &c. The 41st chapter of the 7th of our reign, 46th and 56th of same session, may likewise be suspended, as may 44th chapter of the 13th, &c., 28th chapter of the 8th, &c., relating to Courts of the Admiralty, referred to regulations of trade. 24th of 12th, is a general and necessary law, &c., but that part which relates to America may be repealed. 19th of 14th is repealed, and 45th of same session; 39th of 14th expired; 10th and 18th of 15th, 5th of 16th, 7th, 9th, and 40th of 17th, are measures of war, &c., and will of course determine upon a peace, &c., being established.)

Paper currency—modes of discharging it—by banks, or by each Colony liquidating its own proper bills, &c., or creating within itself a particular fund, or by public treasury—(as proposed by themselves in the articles of confederation, before referred to by us.)

(Commissioners at liberty with the persons with whom they treat, already incurred, and to be incurred for the public service, is to be defrayed.)

Best plan to refer fund and payment to Great Britain, not to consent that Great Britain should pay charges of war incurred by the Colonies.

But may facilitate the payment of that charge.

Some of the first offices to be given to Americans (the appointment of Governors being left to Commissioners).

Or, where not Americans, some appointments to be continued on (where appointment was received before the troubles).

III. LORD GEORGE GERMAIN TO THE COMMISSIONERS.

Most secret and }
confidential. {

Whitehall, 4th Nov., 1778.

I agree entirely with you, that if any decisive stroke had been given to the French squadron, ——, or to the rebels which attacked Rhode Island, it must have been the most happy consequences with respect to this country, not only in America, but in Europe. However, we must hope that the rebels not having reaped that advantage from their new allies which they were taught to expect, and our superiority at sea being again restored, may incline many people to their allegiance, and live happily under the protection of Great Britain. I sincerely wish that the resources of this country could afford such reinforcements as might enable Sir Henry Clinton to carry on an offensive war in the most extensive manner; but you must consider that America is not now the only object of attention, but that the whole power of France is to be opposed, and I am sorry to say that the great armaments in Spain give us the just reason to apprehend that the Court of Madrid will soon depart from that neutrality which it now professes. This I mention to you in confidence, that you may see the true state of our situation, and you may be convinced that every possible effort will be made, consistent with the safety and interest of this country, for reducing the rebellious Colonies to obedience; and whatever ideas they may have entertained that independence will be granted them as soon as the Parliament meets,—I have authority to say that no such proposition will be made or supported by his Majesty's servants, and you will not be disavowed if you declare this in the most explicit manner. The forces which are now in America, I trust will be sufficient to maintain our present possession, and when recruited, I should hope, with increasing as much as possible the Provincials, that sufficient detachments will be spared for carrying on expeditions as wisely and as ably executed as that under the command of Major-General Grey.* Should Spain be diverted in taking part in this war against us, reinforcements may be sent from hence, which may enable the General to extend his operations; in the mean while,

* The attack at the Paoli.

the rebels will severely feel the effects of a war which will keep their coast in perpetual alarm, and, by taking and destroying their ships and stores, whilst we prevent their growing into a maritime power, our own commerce may be freed from the insults of their privateers."

The result of a full investigation of this whole subject, is a perfect conviction of the entire justice of the judgment which has been passed by a competent and charitable judge on the policy of the British Ministry. "In looking back," says Professor Sparks, "upon events as they actually occurred, it is impossible to conceive a collection of state papers more extraordinary for the erroneous impressions, contracted knowledge, and impracticable aims of the writer, than the correspondence of Lord George Germain with the British Commanders in America."

The reader who is curious in such inquiries, is referred to Mr. Burke's admirably-drawn character of Lord George Germain, in a letter in 1773, to the Marquis of Rockingham.—*Burke's Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 410.

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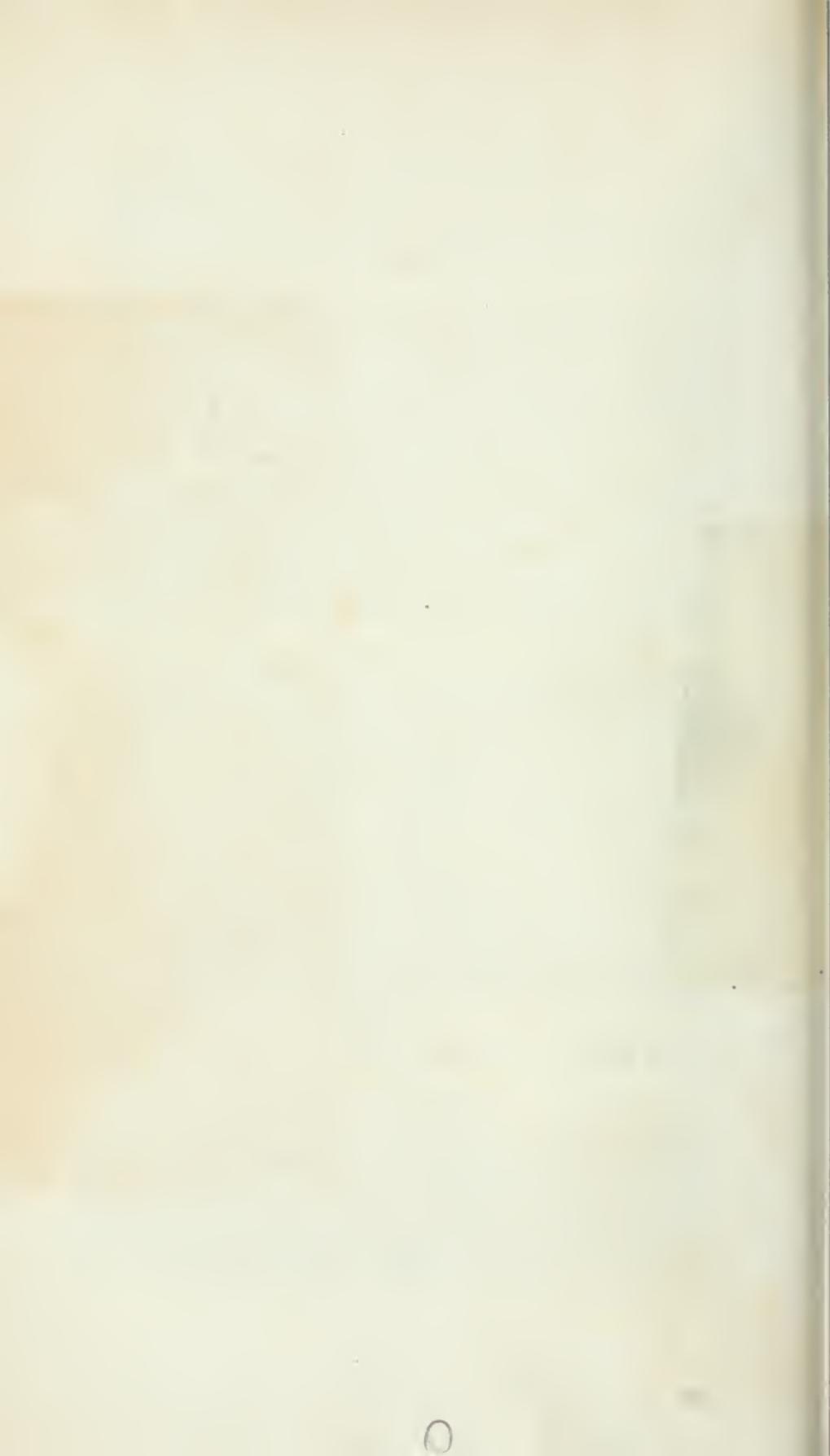
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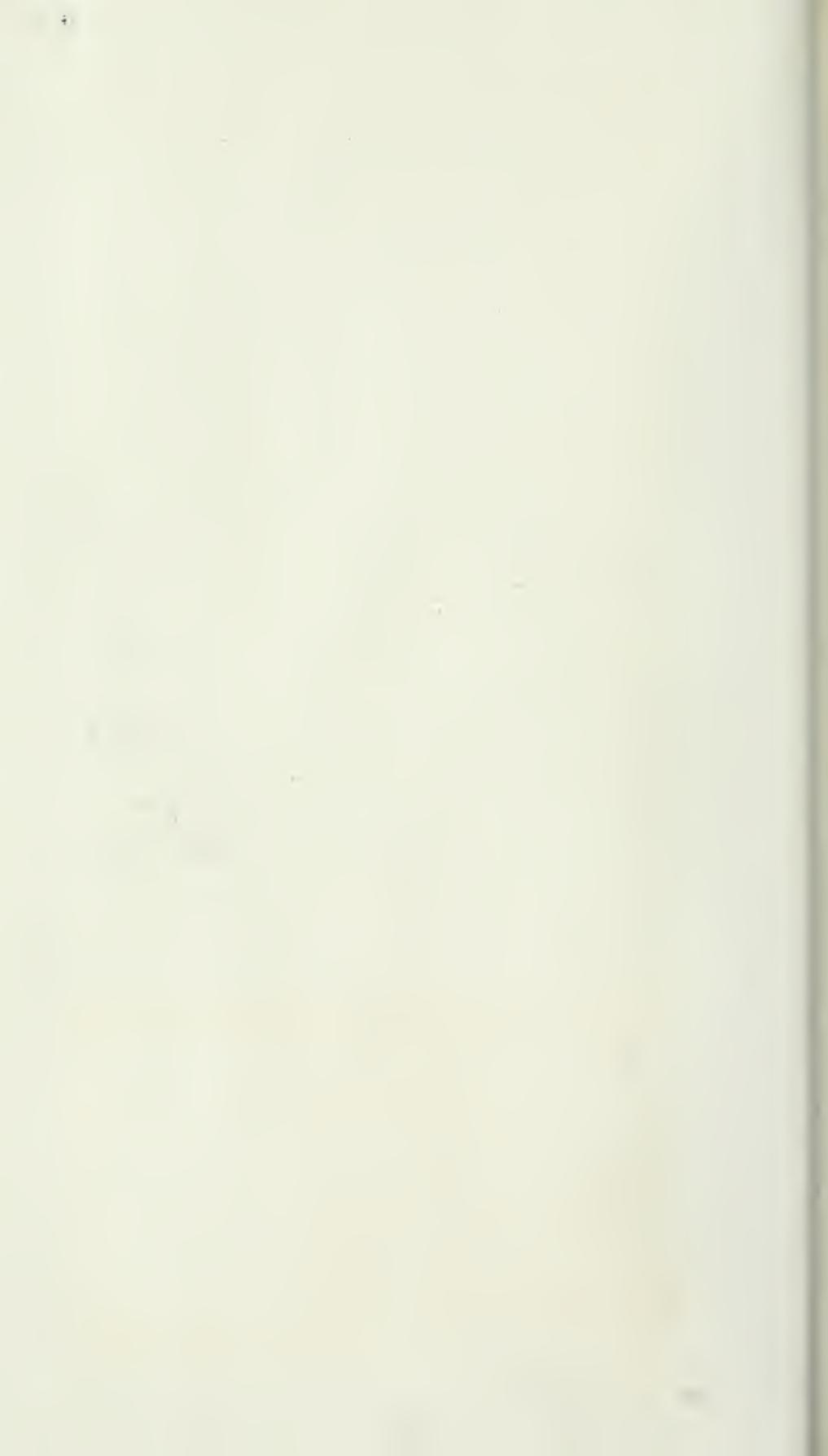
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